

THE *11. Feb.*
INFALLIBILITY
OF
Humane Judgment;
Its Dignity and Excellency.

BEING
A New ART of Reasoning,
and discovering TRUTH, by
reducing all disputable Cases in
Philosophy, Morals, Politicks, or
Religion to general, irresistible,
and self-evident TRUTHS.

The Second Edition,
With some material Corrections and Additions.

The Method also further illustrated and apply'd, in an APPENDIX, deciding some well-known Disputable Cases, by reducing them to Self-evident Propositions, particularly that of the *A———n C——d.*

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INTELLIGENCE

OF

Human Judgments

And Dignity and Character

BY

A. M. A. T. O. R. H. G. H. G. H. G.

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THE

EXCELLENCY

OF

Humane Judgment.

THAT Man is most excellent in his kind who useth to greatest Advantage those distinguishable Properties and Excellencies wherein he differs from other Animals.

Reason is the distinguishing Excellency, Dignity, and Beauty of Mankind: Whosoever by teaching, or otherwise, hinders a Man from using his *Reason*, dishonours him, and degenerates him to something of less worth than he is.

There is no other Use of *Reason*, but to judge of Good and Bad, Justice and Injustice, Wisdom and Folly, and the like, that a Man may thereby attain Knowledge to distinguish Truth from Error, and to determine his Actions accordingly.

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Reason

Reason cannot be hinder'd from doing its Office, without Violence, or Artifice is us'd in bringing Objects to the Senses or Apprehension: It doth not alter any thing, as they are introduc'd to the Senses or Apprehension, Judgment doth determine.

'Tis an Absurdity in Speech to say a Man believes any thing that's contrary to his Reason or Senses.

If a Person who hath Power to inflict Punishment arbitrarily, should perswade you, that a certain hard black Substance is both soft and white, he may raise Amusements, and talk of having peculiar Faculties of Seeing, which others have not; and that the Rays of the Light do fall in such a manner that it must necessarily be so.

If you fear his Power, or have such a Reverence for him, that you will not, or durst not, contradict him, you may pretend to suspect a fault in your Senses, and so be tacitly submissive; you may acquiesce, and not dispute or oppose it: But so long as you can see or touch it, your Judgment doth tell you, it's both hard and black; and 'tis either a Cowardly or Political Lye, to allow the contrary.

The Reason of Man doth as infallibly judge of Wisdom and Folly, Justice and Injustice, and the like, as of Colours; and any disputable Proposition, Religious, Moral, or Political, may be thus brought to the Judgment, and try'd.

There was a good Monarch of a People inhabiting part of *Africa*, under the *Torrid Zone*, who in a long Reign over them, and by a multitude of his Actions, had done nothing but what was
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the Effect of Wisdom and Justice ; he at length left them, and travel'd into this Northern Climate, from whence a Person (after remaining with him one Winter) went into his own Country, and produc'd Instruments, pretending them to be under their King's Hand, constituting him their Deputy-Governour ; and amongst other things which he pretended their King had enjoind them, he expressly commands them to believe, on pain of Death, that the Waters in the Rivers were so harden'd by Cold, that Men and Horses walk'd on them. Now this being repugnant to every thing that their Senses is conversant with, makes it impossible for them to have any such Conception, that so thin, ductile, and fluid an Element can by Cold be harden'd and fix'd.

Notwithstanding that, he prevail'd with some by Interest, and terrified others ; yet the Wisest among them did, on mature Consultation, discover him, by this means, to be an Impostor, and expell'd him as such ; and this not only for their own Safety, but in Defence of their King's Honour, which was much lessen'd and slander'd : It is accusing him of gross Folly and Injustice, to expect they should believe what he before knew they had no Faculties of apprehending : If it had been in his Power to have procur'd them those Faculties, and did not, 'tis still worse.

But for a Prince to make Alterations in his Laws, on purpose to inflict dreadful Punishments for not believing what is impossible to be believed, is the highest Folly and Barbarity.

Nothing but Wickedness and Disorder can be the Effect of such Impositions; those who pretend to believe it, are guilty of Hypocrisie and Lying, and have a justifiable Excuse for using the like Deceit and Barbarity with their Fellow-Subjects. Those who have the Courage to refuse it, fall into Rebellion and Destruction: Nor can a Prince have any Advantage, but must necessarily know he hath lost the Esteem and Veneration they had for him, and that every one looks on him as a Fool and a Monster.

No Man ever pretends to deny the Censure which Reason makes in this Case; but they go about, by Circumlocution and Sophistry, pretending to prove, that by the Laws of his Country, 'tis in his Power to lay what Commands he pleases, and to punish them for not obeying: Which amounts only to thus much, that it is in his Power to be just and merciful, or unjust and barbarous; and he chuseth the latter.

Nor is there any Excuse, or other Defence, for the Folly, but a peremptory Assertion, that you must not, and shall not question it.

There is in this Case a great Confusion and Amusement, rais'd, under the Sanction of a Venerable Name, which if it takes, an Authority is substituted in the room of Reason, over those who are too idle, or too fearful, to examine it; which tends to nothing but the usurping a tyrannical Dominion over the Minds of Men; and when once they are blindfolded, they may be enslav'd and led about at the Pleasure of the Impostor.

Whosoever therefore pretends to have a Commission from a Prince that is indisputably Wise
and

and Just, and nevertheless affirms, that the Commission directs him to lay Foolish and Unjust Commands, and to require unnecessary and vexatious Obedience, ought to be resisted as an Impostor, for imposing on the People, and abusing their Prince's Virtues.

The Imposer in the first Case doth not go about to tell you, that you do not know the thing to be hard and black, but will have you believe he knows it to be white and soft, and you must take it on his Word. Neither doth the Impostor in the last Case say it is not Foolish and Unjust, but he tells you, you must regard his Authority, and not use your Reason.

'Tis therefore an indisputable and universal Truth, that Humane Reason is a competent Judge of Wisdom and Folly, Justice and Injustice, Good and Bad, and the like.

§ 2. Ten thousand different Men may pretend to Sacred Authorities with as many differing Precepts for Religion and Manners, reduc'd to regular Schemes; if they are not to be examin'd but by themselves, and their own Rules, they must of Consequence be every one good; tho' never so repugnant to each other, or to common Sense.

There is no Authority but what hath some others that are repugnant to it, and condemn it; from whence it comes to pass, that there is scarce a single Person in the World, but believes the generality of Mankind are still, and have been, impos'd on by false Authorities.

True Authorities are liable to Additions and Alterations, and if they have no Alterations, are nevertheless liable to the Censure of evil Persons, who may affirm it, tho' falsely.

No Authority must be allow'd implicitly, before it be try'd, whether it be *good* or *bad*: There is no Possibility of trying one Authority by another.

A *Mahometan* will no more have his *Alcoran* try'd by the *Bible*, than a *Christian* will have his *Bible* try'd by the *Alcoran*. You must first shew him some Defects in his *contrary* to Reason, and prove *yours* to be agreeable to Reason, before you can expect he will hear you name it with Patience.

If Reason is not to examine all Authorities, every pretended Authority in the World is good to the Persons pretending to be lieve them, and they are in the right, and do no more than their Duty in defending them.

Which makes such a ridiculous and absurd Conclusion, as is hardly to be express'd in intelligible terms (*viz.*) that every Man must believe his *Antagonist* in the right, though at the same time he believes he merits the greatest Punishments for being in the wrong.

The way to avoid these Absurdities, and to discover and defend the Truth, is to adhere to Reason, as not only a competent and infallible Judge, but the only Test to which all Authorities must submit to be try'd, before they can be known to be *good* or *bad*.

This Judgment of Man is an involuntary Faculty, acted upon by Objects and Determines, without any Consent of the Will; like a Mirror, which

which gives a true Image of every thing that can be brought to it ; and according to the Certainty or Uncertainty of the Evidence, or the Plainness or Obscurity of any Matter, the Judgment determines it to be more or less doubtful, or true or false.

One Man may proceed to an Action on less Certainty than another thinks fit to do ; but this is no Effect of the difference in judging the Thing, but an Act of the Will ; he hath more Courage than the other, and hath a Mind to run a greater Hazard ; to which Case is applicable a common, but very proper Censure, that whosoever runs great Hazards, proceeds rashly, without consulting his Judgment.

No Man can determine what Colour a Thing is of that he sees only at such a distance where Colours cannot be distinguish'd : If there is not therefore sufficient Certainty, or some Matter of Fact, to demonstrate Something clearly to the Apprehension, there is no Authority or Power can force the Judgment to determine whether it be *good or bad*, &c.

All Authorities and Means whatsoever to force or perswade the Belief are vain, useless, and unnecessary : For if the Matter is brought to view, a True Judgment is unavoidable.

§ 3. If a Man views, and examines into the State, Disposition, and Original of the Universe, which way soever he turns himself, he sees an infinite variety of Things compos'd put into very regular Order : A congruous and distributive Justice is seen in the Production and Com-

position of every single Thing, and in the Disposition of it in relation to the whole.

Now, seeing here are so many certain Matters of Fact done regularly, wisely, and justly, 'tis impossible for us to help conceiving, but that there was some Power, Force, or Cause doing these Things which was wise, just, and regular.

The relations which these Productions have one to another makes an Unity in the whole, and demonstrates, that there was not to each a several Cause, but one general Cause to the whole Universe. To this we add the comparative Knowledge of such Faculties which the Mind of Man is compos'd of; and from thence we conclude, that some one such-like Mind or Being is the Agent of these Facts.

From hence we proceed to try if we can make any farther Discovery of what this Agent is, by inspecting into more of his Works: And the farther we trace him, the more *Wisdom* and *Perfection* do we find in him; till at last we discover such a vast Immensity of *Wisdom*, *Knowledge*, and *Power*, that we find it to be infinite and incomprehensible; to which the *Reason* of Mankind, tho' 'tis of the same kind, and serves to make this Discovery, yet it bears no more proportion with it than one single Point doth to the whole Universe.

To this Great Being, Mind, or Author of all Things, we generally give the Name of **GOD**.

The Imagination and Fancy only of there being no Author of *Nature* (or whatever other Name

Name Men please to call it) makes such a discording Jarring in the Understanding, as produces nothing but Absurdities, is very unpleasant-unsatisfactory, unuseful to Knowledge, and no way desirable ; nor can have any room in the Mind of Man, till by some Artifice his *Natural Reason* is defac'd.

There is no such thing as discovering any *Secrets of Nature*, as practising *Natural Philosophy*, or arriving at the Knowledge of any thing that doth not fall accidentally in our way, without tracing the Footsteps of *Nature* ; which Footsteps of *Nature* are a prolifick Invention and Action, *Perfection, Wisdom, and Justice*. That is to say, *Nature* is an Inventor and Actor that hath Wisdom and Justice. Now. there is no Conception of any such Thing in the Mind of Man, but by forming to our selves an Idea of a Mind or Spirit.

Therefore whoever talks thus of *Nature* is no Atheist, but hath a true Notion of GOD, and is only humorous and cross-grain'd, in giving a different Denomination to the same Thing.

§ 4. In searching into the Works of this *Author of Nature*, we find *Stars*, which are demonstrated to us to be as large, and some vastly larger, than this whole Terraqueous Globe which we inhabit ; and by their receiving Light from the same Sun, we find they had the same Author for their Original. To this we add the Knowledge of his filling every place with some Animals ; and that every thing hath not only one Use,

Use, but as many as 'tis capable of; as, the Waters, which do not only serve to help the Earth in its Productions, and for the use of Man and other Animals on the Earth and Air, but is also full of Fish and Animals itself, which have their proper Generation and Habitation there.

From hence we infer, 'tis very probable that those Stars are also inhabited.

And 'tis indeed almost an Absurdity to think the contrary; and a Reflection on his Wisdom and want of Perfection, to imagine he made such prodigious Bodies for no Use, but Man to gaze on: But what sort of Inhabitants, of what Shape, or what Faculties they have, is impossible for Man to know.

The meditating on a Being so vastly wise, good, and powerful, begets naturally a profound Reverence to him, and a Propensity to pay him such Honours and Duties as are suitable to this Notion of him, which amounts to Adoration.

But during these Contemplations, in comes a Person and tells you, You are very right in your Notions: That it conduces very much to magnifying the Power of G O D: That you must also adore and worship Him: That he hath had a Revelation from G O D, in which he is commanded to tell you, You must go further, and believe there are exactly such Men as are here. At this you ask, by what means he can prove it; and, whether G O D hath told him how it may be known? But, instead of a Demonstration of the Matter of Fact, he goes about to tell you, You must believe it without
any

any Proof ; and if you do not, that same Power who produc'd you and those Things, will punish you after the most dreadful and painful methods that can possibly be invented : That you know very well 'tis in his Power so to do.

From hence he goes on to prove, as far as he can, the Truth of this pretended Revelation, but of the Matter of Fact says nothing, as knowing it to be to no purpose.

Now this additional Account which he gives of G O D, and His Commands, is directly opposite to the Notion of *Justice* and *Wisdom*, by which we first of all discover'd His Divine Existence.

Therefore the more Evidence he gives of his pretended Authority, the more he confounds that which he pretends to teach, (that is) the magnifying of G O D, by destroying the whole Foundation upon which the Knowledge of G O D is built.

We have no Notion of G O D at all, but that He is such a Reasonable Mind as is in Man, but in the most exalted Perfection.

If where *Reason* is in the greatest Perfection there is found such foolish and unnecessary Trifles, Injustice, and Barbarity, we can't expect there is any Thing inferiour that can pretend to do or know better.

This destroying the Natural Notion of *Justice* and *Wisdom* brings the Mind of Man into a total Distraction, and leaves him no certain Rule for the Conduct of his Life and Actions, but *Good* may be *Bad*, or *Bad Good*.

But there is no such thing as wholly stifling Man's *Reason* from checking him in doing ill, and approving him in doing well, which is commonly call'd *Conscience* ; nor obscuring altogether the same *Reason*, or *Light of Nature*, from making daily Discoveries of the *Wisdom* and *Justice* of G O D.

Yet listening, out of Curiosity, to this Person, who pretends to prove a *farther Discovery* of this Deity, immediately from its self ; but his pretended *Discovery* accusing G O D of Injustice, Barbarity, and Folly, raises such a Confusion in the Mind, as produces nothing but Absurdities.

For the more *Credit* this Person is of, and the more *Probability of Truth* in this Revelation, the less *Credit* can be given to what it attempts to prove : Because the nearer to *Truth* this Revelation is, the less *Opinion* must we have of G O D's *Wisdom* and *Goodness* ; and the less *Value* and *Esteem* for Him is the unavoidable *Consequence*.

Thus the whole Scheme is broke to pieces, as well of the *Power* and *Perfection* of G O D, as of his *Wisdom* and *Justice* : For if there is no Certainty of his being *wise* and *just*, he can have no *Ability* to do what we have imagin'd : That is, in other words, There is no such *Wise*, *Powerful*, *Perfect*, and *Just Being* : Or, in plain terms, *There is no G O D*.

Thus, for want of *Courage* and *Resolution* in exerting *Reason*, is Mankind artfully betray'd into *Atheism*, *Scepticism*, and stupid *Bigotry* and *Slavery*.

§ 5. Therefore when any *Reveal'd Religion* offers itself to our consideration, it ought to be examin'd by *Reason*; stedfastly asserting, That the general *Reason* of Mankind (that is to say, *Light of Nature* and *Conscience*) is a competent Judge of what is *just* and *wise*, *good* and *bad*; and 'tis impious and blasphemous to affirm any thing of GOD that is *foolish* or *unjust*.

When *Reveal'd Religion* is first introduc'd, there is nothing taught but a total Submission to the Will and Commands of GOD; a correction of the Appetites and Passions; a refining the Minds of Men; Humility, Patience, and a perfect Resignation to Providence; to slight and disregard any Honours and Promotions in this Life, and wholly to endeavour at Happiness in a future State; and on the defect of this, to expect Punishments after this Life.

Now, here being nothing to the detriment of Mankind, they easily fall in with it, and submit to be guided by those Holy and Venerable Persons who teach them; and who pretend not to teach them any thing of their own, but produce a *Reveal'd Authority* for it; which being allow'd to be sufficiently evidenc'd, they submit themselves to it, as well as those they teach.

'Tis necessary, for Devotion and Piety sake, and for their better Instruction, to assemble in little Societies, under the Care of these Guides; who taking the Opportunities from the Necessity there is of Decency and Regularity, and the Willingness of People to be govern'd by them,

them, to insinuate by degrees an absolute Submission to themselves, as Interpreters of this *Revelation*. By the Influence they have over the People, 'tis no hard matter, either by Delusion or Interest, to make themselves and Doctrines *really or seemingly* Necessary to Princes and Legislative Powers, and then soon work themselves into Honours, Preferments, and Dignities ; and, growing still more negligent of the Morals pre-scrib'd in the Rule, live and enjoy Pleasures with Delight and Excess.

But whatever Alterations they introduce are either annex'd to the Rule, or deriv'd from a better Interpretation ; still retaining the first Assertion, *That if they do not Obey this Rule in every Thing, they must suffer to an endless Eternity the most dreadful Pains that the Wit of Man can imagine.*

Men seeing so great a Concern depend on it, think it their Duty to examine into what is there taught ; and finding the aforementioned Persons have done Evil Things, differing from the Rule, nevertheless still depending on the Truth and Authority of the *Revelation*, do necessarily conclude they must act according to the deliver'd Rule, on peril of their Damnation. And the other falling into Vices which are also contrary to the *Light of Nature*, these Inquisitive Persons do further confirm themselves to be in the right, and that the others are departed from it.

§ 6. Now if in this Rule there shou'd be Words of a foreign and obscure derivation, also Allegories, and some places of doubtful Construction, then necessarily follows differing Constructions of the Words and Allegories, and of the doubtful places they affirm something contrary to one another, according to their Inclinations or Understanding, or to the differing Instructions they happen on.

So that the best and most conscientious Persons, who are resolv'd not to be deluded into their Damnation, do dissent and divide from them. And from hence doth unavoidably arise a multitude of different Opinions and Dissentions.

Reason might help here; but whatever they differ in, they all agree, That this Rule being immediate Divine Revelation, whosoever interposes to examin it by *Reason*, deserves Eternal Punishment.

Those who differ, or have contrary Opinions, do think each other lost to endless Eternity: And as they think each other to have merited this at GOD's Hands, 'tis no hard matter to perswade them they merit Punishment from Men. And to hate whom GOD hates, is the necessary Consequence.

Whilst they are perswaded 'tis GOD and Religion, and their own Eternal Happiness they are serving, they necessarily think the more Injuries they do the Enemies of their Religion, and the more they suffer in defence of their own, the more they merit Rewards from GOD.

Thus

Thus is the most barbarous Hatred, Enmity and Contempt of one another introduc'd among Mankind.

And thus far may Men go, who are the most Good and Religious, according as they are taught the Interpretation of these pretended or corrupted Rules.

But there doth not also want Wicked Persons who make their Advantage of this bigotted Disposition of Mankind, by exposing other Men's Errors, and pretending to Reformation and more Sanctity, do deceive many ignorant Persons to as great Errors as the former.

A plausible Pretence to Inspiration, and some Deceits for Miracles is as much as is requir'd to support it for Reason, is damnable.

The most deplorable of all these Evils, and which is the Support and Continuance of all the rest, is when the Education of Mankind happens to be under the Direction of these Tyrannical Impostors, whereby they are early bigotted to whatever is proper only to those Principles; and by this means they have it in their Power to impose Authoritative Maxims, and thereby set Bounds and Stops to Improvements in Knowledge; and where this is not sufficient, even Punishments are allotted for the mentioning or disputing on several useful Things in Philosophy, for no other reason, but because they thwart these Doctrines, and also the Tryals and Punishments, not in the Civil Magistrate, but in their own Power.

This

This Error and Slavery is the natural Production of *All Religions* that reach Examination of their Authorities by Reason to be damnable.

For altho' the Introduction might be true Devotion and Piety, also the several Divisions since might arise from a Desire to reform from the Errors of others, and fear of *Damnation*; yet they soon degenerate, and their Guides usurp an Authoritative Power.

§ 7. If a Scheme of *Religion* was at this day fram'd by the common Concurrence of all Mankind, or sent by indisputable *Divine Revelation*; if there was no Error or Objection against it, but also agreeable to *Reason* itself, except annexing this Penalty to it, That it should be damnable for any Man to vary from it, or question it by *Reason*; that very Sentence wou'd make it impossible not to be vary'd from.

For, in process of Time, some of the Words wou'd grow old and obscure; some Men wou'd make differing Interpretations, for Interest or Humour; some Copies of it might have accidental Errors, and be liable to real Additions and Interpolations, or to suspicion of such.

The Confusion doth not arise from the Truth or Falshood of the *Revelation* itself, but from the laying so prodigious a Stress and Penalty on the believing a Thing to be faultless which is liable to Faults, and not allowing *Reason* to examine it,

And this is the Secret Artifice by which Teachers of *Religion* become Unquestionable, and assume *Absolute Power*.

Thus are Mankind betray'd into Ignorance and Barbarity, to Wars, Seditions, and Rebellions, Civil Authorities insulted, Governments destroy'd, or erected and model'd at their pleasure.

Nor is there any other Mischief, but Mankind are liable to, who are under Subjection to Persons whose Wills and Actions are above the Inspection of *Reason*; who being allow'd to derive all their Power from *GOD* and *Religion* only, whereby all Laws and Politicks that defend and support them are also *Divine Authorities*, and all that oppose them are damnable, and not to be disputed.

§ 8. Altho' most Nations are under this miserable Tyranny, or liable to it, and threatned with it, yet hath not any Person produc'd any one real or pretended *Scheme of Religion*, containing Laws sufficient for the Government of any Country.

No Laws or Politicks were ever yet made or deliver'd that were perfect at once, but (as Necessity requir'd) were added to, and alter'd. *GOD*, who is the common Original of all Men, regards no Nobility or Descent among them; a good *Plebeian* may be a better Man than his Governours.

Mankind is naturally endow'd with *Reason* sufficient to provide Laws, and invent Methods of Government.

To say Government is of immediate *Divine Revelation* or *Authority*, is accusing GOD of Imperfection; and of Folly and Impertinence, to make miraculous Interposition when the *Reason* of Mankind was beforehand sufficient.

Men have naturally some Possessions or Properties which are each Man's own, and which 'tis unjust for another to take away.

Experience taught them, that they can more happily and safely enjoy their Properties in regular Communities than singly: From whence Laws and politick Governments took their Original, and are the result of Necessity and Conveniency, in enjoying and defending their Liberties and Properties to the greater advantage.

The *Good* and *Benefit* of Government is for the Persons governed; and this is the original Law of Laws, and Authority of all Authorities, to which all Governours and Government, Laws, Politicks, and Customs regarding the common Concern of the People, stand refer'd, and are thereby to be try'd.

As all Laws and Politicks are alter'd and alterable as the *Good* and *Benefit* of the Nation doth more appear or require; so, if there are any Laws, Politicks, or Customs to the publick or universal *Detriment*, 'tis just and necessary to alter them.

There are no Customs or Politicks to the publick detriment, but what are introduc'd or supported by Fraud and Violence; 'tis Injustice and Oppression to persist in the use of 'em, and whosoever (without exception of Persons) openly opposes or fraudulently hinders the amending and altering such Politicks,

Laws, and Customs, is either an open Enemy, or private Traytor, to that Country and People.

Men have *Reason* sufficient to find out proper and regular Ways for improving and perfecting their Laws.

If mov'd by Pride and Rashness, they will precipitate themselves into Confusion, or through Ignorance and Cowardice betray themselves to Slavery : They have the evil Effects of their *Follies* to convince them of their *Errors*.

To affirm, that some Millions of People shall have their Lives, Liberties, and Properties at the disposal of any single Person ; or, That there is any Right, divine or civil, by any Law, Custom, or Politicks whatsoever, for any Man to govern at his pleasure ; is not only against the common Sense and Knowledge of all Men, but also a vain and useless Assertion, which hath its rise and being in noisy Tongues only, and produces but a short-life'd Amusement.

For no Tyrant will trust to it, without sufficient Force to defend it ; nor any People submit to it, longer than they can find Means to help themselves.

Government founded on the *General Good* is strong and self-defensible, hath no need of any other Foundation and Support but *Nature, Justice, and Reason* ; and is also justified and defended by *Nature, Justice, and Reason*.

No Man can have any Business, Pretence, or Pleasure in looking for any other Authority to govern by, or form Schemes of Government from,

from, unless he hath something to act or vindicate against *Nature, Justice, and Reason.*

To set *Religious Authority* against the general *Law of Reason*, is to bring the Power of the Civil Magistrate, as well as the Liberty of the People, to a precarious Dependance on those who can give equal Sanction to Rebellions against Governments, or Tyranny in the Governours.

And tho' Tyrannical Religion and Arbitrary Government support each other, yet no Governours aiming at Unjust Power, and bring themselves thereby to a necessity of vindicating their Proceedings by this pretended *Religious Authority*, but soon find themselves in the same miserable Slavery with their People.

Thus seeming-great and absolute Monarchs are under most vexatious Restraints, and can pursue no Designs, tho' their own *Honour and Interest*, as well as that of their Country, is concern'd, if the *Interest and Will* of these their Superiour Tyrants are against it.

A Man may have a Right to the proper Estate and Possessions of his Predecessor, and the Publick Peace and Benefit may make it necessary for him to succeed in the Government, but there's no Native Right for any Man, one more than another, to assume Dominion over any People contrary to the general Consent, Peace, and Benefit of those People.

If any Person, by any Inheritance, Law, Custom or Power whatsoever, pretends to dispose or take part of the Properties of a People without their Consent, it is in his power to take the whole; and that very part may be subservient to him in

seizing the remainder, and destroying the Proprietors.

'Tis therefore dangerous against Nature, Justice, and Reason, to continue such Power.

'Tis just, natural, and reasonable, and the Good of the People govern'd doth require an Alteration of those Laws or Customs, for the preventing so great a Mischiefe.

When a Case is thus clearly view'd and examin'd, *Judgment* makes a Decision involuntarily, and the Argument is at an end, a decisive Sentence pass'd which every Man's *Reason* is satisfied with.

If any Person shall afterwards pretend to tell you, That such an *Author* or *Person*, or such a *Religion*, says otherwise; it makes no alteration in the Case, altho' the Assertions of such *Author* may be mix'd and blended together with part of the former Argument, and Words may be confusedly multiply'd, yet 'tis not the same Argument, but another of a different kind, and is asking the Question, Whether or no that *Author*, *Person*, or *Religion* is just or reasonable.

But for the real Case disputed a decisive Sentence is pass'd, even in the Judgment of the very Opposer; and be his Obstinacy never so great, the Fault is in his Will, and he lyes against his own Conscience.

After this manner may all disputable Positions in *Morals*, *Politicks*, or *Religion* be decided, by being reduc'd to self-evident Truths.

If in a dreadful Storm of Thunder and Lightning a terrible Voice was heard, issuing from the Clouds, by Ten thousand People, commanding them to enter on Record, That Seventy Years hence a Person not yet born should be hang'd for a Sacrilege which his Grandfather had committed to day : This wou'd not hinder any one of those Ten thousand People from believing it to be a gross Injustice, Folly, and Barbarity ; neither cou'd it have any other Effect than to affright and terrifie them into a Compliance contrary to their Knowledge, and to stifle their Consciences.

Because 'tis an irresistible Truth, that *'tis unjust to punish an innocent Man for a guilty one's Fault.*

It is also as irresistible a Truth, That the Author or Original of this Universe is some perfectly Wise and Just Being, incapable of any such Wickedness and Folly.

Therefore from that Just and Wise Being never proceeded any such thing.

There is then no more to be done in all such Cases, but instead of Logical Amusements and References to *Authors* and *Authorities*, to ask the Question of *Humane Reason*, Whether 'tis just and wise, according to the general Notions of *Justice* and *Wisdom* ; as in the Examples and Method aforegoing.

So easie and natural is the way of discovering Truth, did not Men suffer themselves to be artfully deluded out of it.

§ 9. The whole Diabolical Mystery of this *Black Art* consists in exciting the Passions, gratifying some, and provoking others: And thus, by pleasuring momentary and brutish Instincts, is *Passion* substituted instead of *Reason*; whereby Men are taught to please themselves, and oppose their Neighbours, and to practise their *Opinions* (or rather their *Affertions* and *Humours*) one on another.

Thus are Men first work'd up to a *Perturbation of Mind*, then to a *Privation of Reason*: From thence arise *disorderly Motions* of the Animal Spirits; and the Religious Sanctity given to this *State of Corruption* makes a Constitutional and Habitual Distemper, which is a dangerous, mischievous, and true Species of *Madness*.

The Agitators in this Hellish Wickedness are the true Devils and Destroyers of the Happiness of Mankind, Traytors to the general Peace of the World, and to all the Countries where they live; Enemies to Humanity, and impious *Blasphemers*, and *Dis honourers of GOD*, a Scandal and Interruption to true *Piety*!

These have degenerated Mankind from the Excellency and Dignity of their Species, and debased them to Brutality, destroy'd the Light of Truth, and left them in Error and Ignorance, by the Mists which they have rais'd, that the Understanding of Mankind is nothing but *Darkness* and *Confusion*.

'Tis therefore high time to see if we can't find some divine *Spirit* capable of moving on this dark *Chaos*, to bring forth Light.

BOOK II.

§ 10. **T**HIS Judgment, Reason, Light of Nature, Conscience, or Common Sense, is one and the same Thing, only varying its Name according to its different Uses and Appearances, or rather at the Will and Pleasure of the Denominator.

It is a Faculty that wou'd lead a Man to nothing but *Truth* and *Goodness*.

And tho' the Notions of *Good* and *Bad* may be the Effect of Experience, or receiv'd by the Sense, if a Man hath but a few of those Notions, or a great many, (that is to say, if he hath much *Knowledge*, or little) if this *Knowledge* and the Faculty judging it should be both of 'em the Result only of *Experience* and *Sense* ; if the Cause from whence it arises be never so obscure, or never so plain ; be it acquir'd, produc'd, deriv'd, infus'd, created, or begotten, it matters not in this Case.

There is such a Faculty, known to us by the Names of *Judgment*, *Reason*, *Light of Nature*, *Conscience*, and *Common Sense*, that doth determine, without any Consent of the Will, which of those Notions are good, and which *bad* ; doth dictate which to *chuse* or *refuse*.

And

And all Errors, both in Opinion and Practice, are in the *Will* only, in not chusing as the *Judgment* dictates.

One Man may have more Opportunities, or be more industrious than another, so may be a better Man, having attain'd to more *good Notions*, and can do more *good Actions*.

But what little the other doth know, he hath as infallible and great a power of judging the *Goodness* of as the other hath.

Notions by which Knowledge is produc'd, do enter by the Senses and Experience, and are the Materials on which the Apprehension, Judgment, and Resolution act, from which there are also other Actions produc'd in the Mind, such as Inferring, Comparing, Compounding, and Inventing; and until Ideas were enter'd the Mind for them to act on, we knew nothing of such Faculties.

But 'tis absurd to infer from thence, that Apprehension, Judgment, and Resolution, are created or produc'd from these Ideas, or from the Senses that convey them.

If a Person born with proper Eyesight was kept from his Birth to Manhood blindfold, that he could not use his Sight, he can have no manner of Notion of Sight, nor is there any Possibility of making him frame any Conception of of what it is, till the Obstacle is remov'd, and Objects of Sight do thereby present themselves to his Eyes; but the Objects he sees, nor the Light that shews them, do not create or produce the Sense of Seeing; the curious Organ of the
Eye

Eye was before perfect, and the vivive Spirits in their proper Channels.

§ 11. The Senses by which the first Images are introduc'd, seem to be too narrow and few for the Mind, the Apprehension is of an immensurable Extent. If there were fifty ways, instead of five, to convey Ideas, it could comprehend them, and the Judgment is perfect, and could determine to Infinity: The Will also seems to have the Capacity of a Power vastly beyond what it can now exercise.

But when we examine the Mind in this View, it seems, in respect of the Will, to be in a State of Imperfection: A Man would be apt to think it was learning and improving under the tuition of something still greater than itself, who seeing that want of Experience makes it run on to Action, without observing whether the Effect of the Action be good or ill, (like one newly sensible of his Power, and glad of all Opportunities in exercising it) hath therefore thought proper to confine the Apprehension to a few things; and also circumscribe the Will, that it may see and learn, by what little is in its Power, how to behave itself when it shall have more.

But the Judgment having no Evil, is unconfin'd; as if Man, tho' taught by something else, is design'd to be a free Agent of himself, and to have the *Glory and Benefit* of his good Actions, and the *Dishonour and Detriment* of his bad.

Notwithstanding that our Contemplations run so naturally to this great Capacity of the Mind, yet 'tis so circumscrib'd in this Body, that we meet with some Interruption in pursuing the Thought, because 'tis difficult for us to know that it hath any other Ways and Methods of *perceiving*, or Power of *acting*, but what must be either done by the Instruments of the Body, or the Notion thereof convey'd to us by such Resemblances as we are us'd to: For even our inmost Thoughts and Reflections can't be convey'd to one-another, nor can we produce them to our external Senses, but by framing them into the form of Words, which enter'd first by hearing.

Therefore if the Mind hath any other ways of Perception and Action; if it cannot invent means to convey it to our Memory, and explain it by some such Idea's as have enter'd our Senses, we cannot utter, express, or know it.

But the Mind finding it self thus confin'd, that it cannot get such a number of Ideas and Materials to work on; and also that it cannot communicate, produce, and explain, without great difficulty, what it doth frame, for want of more Senses and Instruments of Action, falls to contriving, compounding, and improving what it hath into artificial Senses, to supply and help these defects: Thus are Microscopes, Telescopes, and other such Machines form'd. And Writing had its Original from the Incapacity of the Sense of Hearing, in conveying the Operations of the Mind into distant Places and Times; and so the Mind invented a Method of doing it by Sight.

Even

Even *Speech* itself was originally produc'd and invented by a Necessity which the Mind had of conveying more Ideas to itself.

The Organs of the Voice, and of Hearing, in many Brutes are as well fitted for speaking as a Man's; and had a Brute a Mind restless and active, wanting Ideas, and desirous of communicating and improving its Knowledge and Actions, it would as easily frame Words as a Man did at first.

The Mind doth thus receive and convey Ideas by more ways than is naturally allotted it: There are evidently Bars and Stops in these Instruments of Conveyance, which the Mind endeavours to surmount; which Endeavours of the Mind are Evidences of certain pure Operations of the Mind distinct from the Senses.

A Machine is compos'd, all the Parts proportion'd, the Dimensions set, the Motion regulated in the Mind: This is as much the pure Production of the Mind, without any Assistance from the Senses, tho' the Idea of the Materials were long since convey'd there by the Senses, as the making of it is afterward the proper Operation of his Hands, tho' the Iron and Brass were not made by him.

Brutes have all the Functions of the Body in as great Perfection as Men; their Blood and Spirits circulate as well, and as quick; their Senses as perfect, and as exquisitely finish'd.

They have also the same *Mediums*, as of Light to bring Objects to the Sight, and Air to the Hearing; their Animal and Vital Spirits have the same Mechanical and Mathematical Motions
and

and Figures; send forth as subtle *Effluvia*, and as fine Particles; yet none of this ever produc'd such prodigious Improvement and Invention as Man hath; not so much as the Art of Speech, even tho' they have been taught Words, yet having no want of the Conveyance of any Ideas more than they have, they never use them as Words, but as differing Sounds only.

The difference then is in the Capacity of their Minds: The Mind of a Brute performs nor invents any more than is necessary for its Body and the Contingences.

The Mind of Man perceives, invents, and performs fifty times more.

Now seeing the Materials *of which*, and the Instruments *by which*, are the same to the one as the other, and yet differing Operations are perform'd.

The difference of the Operations must be in some Power operating.

Therefore the Power operating, doing, and perceiving, is something distinct from the Materials and Instruments, whereby one makes not all the Use that might be made of what he has; the other has not a fiftieth part of what it wants and would use, and therefore invents and contrives to supply his Necessities.

Since the Motions and Images of these Materials, and the Organs and Means conveying them, are in every respect the same; and this Power operating on them so vastly differing, 'tis plain it had not its Being from any of those Materials, or Images and Motions of them.

'Tis impossible for our Understanding to pursue this Enquiry further, without making a separate Notion, and giving a distinguishing Denomination to it.

And since it is not deriv'd or form'd of this Matter, nor of the Motion of it, we must conceive it to be not Material, and therefore call it for the present an Immaterial Mind.

The chief Cause of the difficulty Men make in believing this, is not from any real Obscurity in the Case itself, but arises from a bigotted Antipathy, founded on an arbitrary Maxim, that a Brute has not an Immaterial Mind; so by admitting one Absurdity, do throw themselves unawares on another.

A Bird can frame a Nest of proper Materials, chuse some, and refuse others; build it of a fit magnitude, also at a proper time, before it actually wants it, and in a proper place, and contrive it defensible against Accidents.

Instinct in this Case is the Body, wanting somewhat, and by the Sense of Feeling conveys the first Idea of it to the Mind, but sometimes the Mind of a Brute foresees a Want to come; and although 'tis something difficult for us to apprehend how this Foresight can happen from meer Matter only, yet supposing the first Idea of it to be convey'd by some Sense or Instinct, the Mind doth nevertheless contrive Means to supply this Want.

If this can be done without some Power operating, that is distinct from the Matter operated on, by, and with, then by the same Means may a Ship be built, or a Book wrote.

The

The Error and Confusion is thus produc'd : 'Tis allow'd as an incontestable Truth, that a Brute hath no Immaterial Mind, and also that a Man hath.

Now both these are asserted without any examination, but are taken on Tradition, and tho' one of them happen to be true, and the other false, yet the Reason why one is true, is no more known to the Persons affirming it, than are the Reasons of the others being false.

From whence it happens that seeing some Actions in Brutes of the same Nature, as are produc'd by the Mind of Men, they immediately doubt of the true Assertion, and taking it for granted that the Figure and Motion of Matter produces Invention and Thought in Brutes, endeavour to find out, by what mechanical means 'tis perform'd also in Men.

Tho' the Ideas on which the Mind operates are convey'd by the Senses, and we explain the Operations of the Mind to our selves, and to one-another, by such means as our Senses are us'd to, yet have not those Ideas the same Images; nor are the Operations perform'd after the same manner as we explain them : Of which we have an evident Demonstration in Men deaf and dumb.

We explain no other Method of Thinking, but it is as it were whispering of Words to our selves.

When we debate, affirm, object, and answer in our Mind, we fancy to our selves an Idea of talking and arguing by Words; and these Thoughts seem to be in our common Language, and

and in no foreign Words; so that we have no *Notion* of what our *Thoughts* are, but *Words*.

Yet do these deaf and dumb Persons thus think, affirm, object, and answer in their Minds, explain their *Thoughts* to themselves, produce them to their Senses, and to Others, and yet have no *Idea* of *Words*.

Knowledge therefore is produc'd by the Mind in the Actions of *Apprehension*, *Judgment*, and *Resolution*, and is not the Productions of any such *Motions* of Matter; but any *Motion* or *Instrument* that the Mind can procure to convey the first *Notion* of Things, will serve its turn,

'Tis therefore an active Power wanting *Knowledge* that actuates Bodies, and makes use of all the Functions those Bodies are capable of, to transmit such Things to it as it is desirous to act on.

And by this means only can we account for the Industry of the Deaf, who supply the defects of Hearing and Speaking by Actions and Gestures. And if this same Mind was in Brutes, and wanted *Knowledge*, it would as certainly use the Organs of Hearing and Voice, and convert them to Speech, as it hath in Men: And as it doth contrive those Actions in the Deaf, whose Design, Nature, and Fitness for such a use as admitting and transmitting *Knowledge*, perceiving and relating *Histories*; then comparing in the Mind, and relating others by only Actions and Gesticulations, wou'd be so far from the belief of any Man, that he cou'd never allow it, did not daily Facts make it irresistible.

As is also the Conclusion naturally succeeding this Observation, and the Comparison between *Men* and *Brutes*.

That there is an Immaterial Mind distinct from the Bodies of *Men* and *Brutes*, by which these Bodies are actuated.

The Mind of a *Brute* is confin'd, or confines itself, only to the Necessities of the Body, and so uses as much Power, Knowledge, and Invention as best serves to supply those Necessities, and no more, making itself subservient to the Body.

The Body of *Man* is subservient to his Mind, and tho' circumscrib'd by the Body, yet is not confin'd to the Laws and Necessities of it only, but aiming at infinite Power and Knowledge, makes the Body serve it in gaining Knowledge, and exercising its Power to the utmost that the Organs and Matter of it can be contriv'd to extend to.

§ 12. When the Senses and Instruments of this Body are all at rest, and cease from acting, we have many Phantasms or Representations which are remember'd when waking, the greater part of which we can't understand, or make any thing of. But sometimes it happens that a View of a Transaction that hath not been yet in being, or is only to be done the next day, or some days after, is by this means presented to us; sometimes by a real View of the Thing itself, or by symbolical Representations; other times by Contraries, or by any common Notion that a Man hath heard; if such a Thing be dreamt of, it shall signifie such Accident to happen. Very often the
most

most trifling Occurrences, and also Things of greater moment, are seen.

'Tis an Error to think in this case that the *Judgment* is asleep, because he shall dream of his doing some evil Action which he wou'd abhor waking.

If a Man dreamt he was cutting or killing another ; this may perhaps be only an Endeavour of the Mind to explain to him, that some Person will do him an injurious Action the next day.

For the Ideas, when they do signifie any thing, are only the Mind, who perceives the tendency of other Spirits or Things to Actions, and the Memory endeavouring to form them into such Characters as it is conversant with from the Senses.

But for the most part the memory of Things past, the Constitution of the Body, Disorders by Passions and Commotions, do cause such a medly and addition, that but little can be clearly made out: It may be also we want Experience and Observation.

The proper Vision of the Mind is commonly only some instantaneous View, or single Action; for when the View or Action alters, 'tis for the most part the interposing of Phantasie, and other Disorders.

But altho' we can't often make out much to foresee what will happen afterward, yet thus much we can conclude on, That the Mind hath perception of Things without the Senses, and that have had no motion or being in Matter.

So frequent are these Operations of the Mind Fore-knowledge of Things, and explaining them to us by Memory, that the reason why 'tis slighted is not from any Proof that it wants, but from a Neglect in observing it.

The idle and fabulous use that is commonly made of Dreams, makes Men of Sense rather ashamed to own or talk of the Truth, than not to believe it, or take notice of it to themselves.

Our not being able to prove how such Fore-knowledge is possible, is a strong Confirmation of the main Point aim'd at.

It wou'd not be Actions of Immaterial Beings perceiving and acting with one another, and having methods of Perception of Things which Bodies have not, if we cou'd explain those methods by our Material Senses, which act on nothing but Matter.

We can no more demonstrate this, than we can by what Ideas, Images, or Methods deaf and dumb Men think and argue in their own Minds: Nor could we admit the Truth of it, any more than of those Persons telling their Thoughts by Gestures, did not frequent Matters of Fact make it impossible to be withstood.

'Tis evident, that sometimes we see by our Dreams that the Mind hath such knowledge and methods of Action and Perception as never enter'd by the Senses; and 'tis highly probable that it hath ten times as much at that time, which the Memory cannot communicate.

Since it hath Knowledge without the Senses at one time, 'tis capable of the same at another.

Tho'

Tho' the Explanation of these Things may be perform'd by some Methods suitable to the Union the Mind hath with the Body, yet the Actions themselves are done without any Help from the Body.

Which is no other than its having for that time a kind of distinct Existence.

We can't help therefore conceiving it to be a Spirit capable of existing by it self without the Body, and not liable to the Accidents thereof.

§ 13. This Review and Examination of the Mind may serve as a general Example of the Method Man takes in acquiring Knowledge (as well in natural Philosophy as in all other Cases) how he comes to be obstructed in the Process, and by what means these Obstructions may be overcome.

The great Capacity of the Mind, beyond the narrow Limits of the Body, appears easily, which is so pleasing a Notion that the Will runs giddily on, and without examining further, takes up a Resolution of affirming the whole System of the Immortality, without any other Foundation; here are two Dangers to be observ'd,

The one is resolving on a thing, because we like it.

The other is making a greater Conclusion than the premis'd Circumstances will admit of.

Whereby tho' the Case afterwards proves true, yet is there either no Knowledge of the Truth, or on so shallow a Foundation, that it cannot bear the shock of the Objection which succeeds (*viz.*)

that this vast Capacity is no more than the Effect of Sense and Experience.

Going on further in comparing the Minds of Men and Brutes, and Observations on deaf Persons, we find that the Mind hath Operations of its own, tho' they are on Matter, yet it appears to be something distinct from the Body ; but here arises another Obstruction from a contrary Passion to the former, that is, an Antipathy against a Brute's having an Immaterial Mind ; and because we can't conclude, from these Observations, that a Man hath a Mind, without also allowing a Brute one, do rather chuse to part with our own Immateriality than with our Hatred to the Brute.

This being at length surmounted, the great Capacity of the Mind, and its Immateriality being discover'd, we endeavour to trace it farther, till we find it capable of a separate Existence, and that it hath Actions and Perceptions without any Help of the Senses.

And in this we meet with a remarkable Instance of the Danger of being bigotted to common Opinions, and suffering ourselves to be laugh'd out of the Observation of Dreams, whereby the greatest Demonstration of the Soul's Immortality lies neglected and lost.

But when we come to consider the View we have of the Soul's Existence without the Body, the great Capacity of it, and the irresistible Imagination of its Communication with other great, intellectual, and spiritual Beings, our Contemplations carry us to the highest Pitch of Admiration and Delight, and to an uneasy Desire of pursuing the Knowledge of it.

There-

Therefore when a Man hath pass'd and overcome those Difficulties by his Natural Reason, (and there is no other way of doing it) we suppose him strong enough to resist any Impostor, who, under Pretence of Religion, shall arbitrarily impose absurd Notions of the Soul, and make it damnable to enquire into the Truth of its own Existence.

Such Attempts as these ought to be resent'd as injurious to Humanity, and the Persons so imposing them might be justly condemn'd by the common Consent of Mankind, to have that Mind he hath so little Use for confin'd to serve the Appetites of some Brute, where he might enjoy the Brutish Irrationality he so much likes, and would degenerate others too.

Physical and Metaphysical Opinions, as well those tending to Religion as Philosophy, are Results and Conclusions taken from the Discovery and Observation of certain Things seen, or Matters of Fact.

These Results and Conclusions are the Effects of Conceptions which succeed each other, from a Consideration of these Matters and Things.

Which Things and Matters come under the common Cognizance and Observation of all Mankind.

Religion and Knowledge is not confin'd to any Persons, who have particular Faculties of perceiving, judging, and improving thereby.

What is useful is for general Benefit and Instruction.

It may nevertheless be possible for a Person to want that Means of Evidence, or Method of per-

ceiving those Things or Matters, which others have; for which Reason he can't attain to such Opinions or Conclusions: But these Defects are visible and demonstrable.

We can't expect a Man who never dream'd himself, to have the Opinion (on his own Knowledge) of the Soul's distinct Existence, taken from the Observation of Dreams, because he wants the Evidence of the Matter of Fact on which 'tis founded.

'Tis as Unjust and Foolish to desire this, as to ask a Blind-man to decide a Controversie about Colours.

And for the same Reason 'tis also impious, and blasphemously accusing GOD of Injustice and Folly, to say he hath commanded, or requires any such thing.

In all other Religious and Philosophical Enquiries, as well as in these of the Being of a GOD, and the Immortality of the Soul, the Things seen, and Matters done, are the same to the common Senses of Mankind, to one as well as to another.

The Judgment of all Men will make the same Determination, if the Thing hath the same Appearance.

Since then the Judgment of Men, nor the Things from whence these Results take their original cannot err or differ, and yet there is a difference in the Opinions and Conclusions, this difference must proceed from the method of conceiving by which means in the course of these Conceptions succeeding each other, there are some Additions or Diminutions made in the Imagination

gination only to the Thing or Matter seen or done ; or some other artificial Obstruction which hath amus'd the Judgment, and hinder'd its Operation.

How these *Additions, Diminutions, Alterations, and Obstructions* are form'd and introduc'd, is represented in the Examination of the state of the Mind.

The way to avoid them, is to search the disputed Opinion down to the Origin, from whence such Notion or Thought cou'd be first produc'd ; and to suffer no Conclusions, but what are the natural and irresistible Conceptions from the Things seen or done.

By which means the Passions, Prejudices, and Alterations will appear, and the Injustice of them be demonstrated to common Reason and Sense.

Tho' a Man may not be able to attain to all the Knowledge he desires, yet may Disputes be decided, and Errors be demonstrated to be Errors to the general Judgment of Mankind.

A Person, instead of thus examining Opinions by his own Senses and Judgment, or after his own Senses and Judgment hath seen and determin'd them, may raise Distractions and Confusions from what some suppos'd venerable Author or Person hath said contrary to such evident decision, but this neither alters the Case nor General Judgment ; his wilful Obstinacy, and resisting his own Judgment, may be as easily seen as if he should persist in affirming a Thing to be black because he hath formerly said so, or heard some worthy Person affirming it, altho' the Thing is

is now brought to his Face, and shew'd to be white.

The Danger is here seen, as well as the Difference, between affirming a Thing to be true, and believing it to be so.

Believing is an Assent of the Judgment, or knowledge of a Thing being true on a due apprehending and judging it.

To a Person that knows the divers Accounts and Descriptions from time to time of the City *Constantinople*, that many Affairs of State and Commerce are transacted there, Men and Letters frequently passing, hath a Belief of there being such a City.

But this Belief is no Act of Faith, but a passive and irresistible Conception, which 'tis not in his power to help, arising from those evident Matters of Fact: But a Person who knows not those Affairs, Transactions, and Matters of Fact doth not believe there is any such Place, nor can any Laws or Commands force him to believe it. But when he shall have duly inform'd himself of those Facts and Evidences, and they have had Time to take place in his Mind, the Belief, or rather Knowledge of it, becomes impossible for him to avoid; and then it wou'd be as barbarous, absurd, and vain to command him not to believe it.

Truths adapted to common Belief must have Evidences adapted to common Reason and Sense.

Otherwise they can neither be prov'd or known; which is the same thing as if they were not.

Here

Here are Facts which excite an Affirmative Notion of the Truth, and render a Negative Falsity impossible, absurd, and repugnant to common Reason.

As much as the Affirmative comes short of general and irresistible Evidence, or the Negative of a palpable Absurdity, so many degrees is it remov'd from a positive Certainty, and can only amount to a greater or lesser Probability.

Therefore Faith contrary to common Sense and Reason, or without a demonstrable Assent of the Judgment to something seen and apprehended, is downright Lying, or nothing at all but an unintelligible *Chimæra* in the Imaginations only of very wicked or very ignorant Persons.

And Scepticism is the production of Fear and half-thinking, a Phantom conjur'd up by Cowardice and Idleness.

Humane Judgment, as infallible as it is, is no more than an Effect of the same congruous Justice that is to be seen in all other parts of the Creation.

Man hath a Mind fitted for Knowledge, whose Business here is Improvement, and learning Experience.

The Judgment is a Faculty whereby it can chuse what's proper for its purpose ; and without this, Man wou'd have been the only imperfect Animal in the Creation.

The method of the Mind's perceiving and acting by the Senses and Organs of this Body is absolutely necessary for the attaining the End for which it is here plac'd, and is no more than the same Harmony and Perfection there is in all other things,

things, whereby the Good and Happiness of both depend on one-another: And the Union is so exquisitely finish'd, that the Subsistence and Preservation of the Body, and the Exercise and Improvement of the Mind, are harmoniously complicated.

§ 14. *This Judgment, Reason, Light of Nature, Conscience, Emanation of Light from above, Ray of the Divinity, Image of GOD, Spirit of Truth,* Is a Rule to regulate our Appetites and Passions, and thereby prevent Evils that arise from our selves.

And a Light to discover what Evils or Errors may be impos'd on us by others.

When a Man hath by Examination found himself in an Error, in following the Dictates of his Appetites and Passions, and persists in a Resolution to follow his Reason, he is then converted from Evil to Good.

§ 15. All Schemes of Religion aim at teaching something of the Immortality of the Soul, of rewarding or punishing it after this Life, as it shall have deserv'd here; but the Crimes for which, and the Methods by which, are so irrationally handled, that they are either the Subject of Abhorrence or Ridicule; and indeed the Contempt that Men have for such Impositions under the name of *Religion*, is as as just as it is common.

But there was a certain Venerable Person, who with diverse other good *Doctrines* which he taught, had this rational one, *That all Sins should be forgiven*

given Men, but the Sin against the Holy Spirit.

If this *Soul of Man* should resist by Rashness of Will, the Instruction of these Rational Faculties, *Light of Nature*, or *Holy Spirit*, shou'd proceed to Actions without the Judgment, and thereby not improve itself with the Opportunities and Power it hath for that purpose.

If GOD hath design'd it for some Improvements, in order to something great and glorious hereafter, but being a free Agent, it hath refus'd it, and interrupted the Design; it wou'd be unjust and unreasonable to think it shou'd not be punish'd; neither wou'd it be for the benefit of the Soul itself in the end; for the Design of Providence must be accomplish'd, and it could never be fit for the Perfection aim'd at, was it not to be convinc'd of its Error by some Punishments suitable to its evil Actions.

This Doctrine or Revelation, That *all Sins shall be forgiven but that against this Holy Spirit*, is so agreeable to the Methods of our Enquiry by Natural Reason and Justice, and such a Help to us in pursuing it farther, that makes it worth a Man's while to search into more of the Precepts of this GREAT INSTRUCTOR.

Perhaps while we have been giving up our Reason, on pretence of giving place to Religion, we have been only betray'd to abandon the Defence of Religion, and in reality have been cheated out of all true *Reveal'd Religion*, as well as *Natural*.

§ 16. All Men who have the Knowledge of a Deity and of Providence, of the Immortality of their

their Souls, will have a natural tendency to *Religion*; and there is a necessity of having proper Times, Seasons, and Methods for the exercise thereof: The great Use of it, in reducing the irregular Tempers of Men, and in cementing civil Society (to go no further than a Political Consideration) makes it an indispensable Benefit.

Therefore they are wicked Persons, Fools, and Enemies to *Mankind*, who are Enemies to *Practical Religion*.

But to so great a length have our Abusers of it carried their tyrannical Intentions, and to such a height of malicious precipitation hath their Passions hurried them, (a Consequence natural to Persons habitually wicked) that all *Practical Religion* is in great danger of being overthrown, they having almost forgot to cover their Pretensions with Sanctity, or so thinly done it, that the greater part of even the Vulgar, seeing the Artifice in the pretended Champions of it, are ready to oppose the whole System, insomuch that there is little else to support it but *Passion, Humour, Interest*, and *Clamour*, with scarce a profession of *Piety*.

How short a time this *Passion, Humour*, and *Interest* may last, before some Accident or Alteration alters the same in the same Persons, or stronger *Passions* and *Interest* may oppose them, and overthrow all, is worth the consideration of those who have the Happiness of *Mankind* under their Care.

To so momentary and precarious a dependance have these shallow Politicians reduc'd the present
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Constitution of *Practical Religion*, and their own political Interest and Existence.

But we have liv'd in an happy Age and Country, to see a Just and Publick Censure pass on this Wickedness.

And an Honourable Dignity and Distinction deservedly confer'd on the Person who opposes these dangerous Methods ; who wisely foreseeing the certain Fall of a Superstructure which is upheld by so weak and already-broken Support, having the Wisdom to part with only what cou'd no longer be retain'd, that is, the arbitrary Imposition and Tyranny, is reducing the whole to Rationality, thereby establishing *Practical Religion* on an invincible Foundation of *Truth* and *Reason*, and endeavouring to preserve the whole ORDER.

Proving himself thus not only a wiser and more sagacious Person, but a greater Politician, and good Friend to Mankind, in preserving to them so great and useful a Blessing and Benefit.

BOOK III.

§ 17. **T**He surest way to prevent the Impositions of others in deccitfully teaching us, is to learn the Art of teaching our selves, by considering what the Use of this Mind is, what Faculties

culties we have to instruct us, and what to be instructed.

The whole Art of using, instructing, and regulating the Mind, is contain'd in Justice, Judgment, and Equity.

The Faculties of it, are, Apprehension or Perception, Judgment and Will, or Resolution.

The Apprehension must be reduc'd to Justice, and the Will to Equity, the Judgment is perfect, and regulates the whole.

When an Object first offers itself to the Apprehension, great Care must be taken that it be not represented in any undue *Medium*, but naked, and without Gloss; that we do not so much as offer to determine whether it be *good* or *bad*, before we have perceiv'd it, with a most exact Justice, that no false Ideas or Images of Things be brought to the Judgment.

The chief Obstacles to Justice in the apprehending of Things are Bigottries.

Of which those receiv'd from our Infancy are most difficult to be remov'd; but whosoever would arrive at true Knowledge, must examine every former-receiv'd Notion with as much Impartiality and Diffidence as if he never before knew it, tho' it seems never so plausible.

If an Author, or Friend, whom we respect, or a Person of general Esteem, present any thing to us, we are very apt to take it, without any doubt, and thereby imperceptibly betray our selves into a most dangerous Bigottry.

For one pernicious Error may be bound up with a thousand Truths, and on the contrary an
use-

seful Truth may be learn'd from an erroneous Person, or found among a thousand Errors.

There are some natural and habitual Tendencies of the Will and Constitutions of the Body, inclining us to Sympathies and Antipathies : But when an Object presents, if we first examine our selves, and try if we have any Affection or Aversion, it will be no hard Matter to conceive it, without the unjust Addition of our Love or Hatred.

All the Errors in Opinion, relating to Arts and Sciences, as well as to Religion and Morality, are owing to this careless Injustice in the first apprehending of Things.

Abundance of Things which appear mysterious, when they come to be strictly examin'd, after this manner, they are not found so, the Mysteries insensibly vanish.

And those we can't come to a right Apprehension of, can never be determin'd to be *good* or *bad*, *right* or *wrong*, and can therefore bring nothing useful either to Knowledge or Practice.

The familiar Example of holding a strait Stick partly in Water, ought always to be in Remembrance ; for if it was not to be taken out of that undue *Medium*, the Judgment could never determine it to be any other than crooked, as it appears to the Eyes.

That which makes a Man compleatly Wise, is an Equality of Mind, an Equitable Resolution, not to swerve one way or another, but to chuse and refuse what our Judgment dictates an invincible Fortitude and Subjection of the Will.

§ 18: This *Justice, Judgment, and Equity* is the Sum and Perfection of all *Wisdom*; *this* is that by which the World was produc'd.

All *Arts and Sciences, Morals, Politicks, and Religion*, have here their Original, and to *this* are they reduc'd and try'd.

All Inventions are from *hence*, and without *this* there can be no Improvement.

Rules are devis'd by the Wise, for the Instruction of others, and the Explanation of their Meaning.

But there is something in all Arts and Learning, which the *Rule* cannot utter: Whoever therefore finds not out this general Reason of Things, this Method of teaching himself never arrives at any Perfection.

'Tis not to stay criticising on second-hand Principles, but searching out the Reason why they are so call'd.

This is that *inexpressible somewhat* by which great Masters in *Rhetorick, Poetry, Painting, and Musick*, have such happy Success by excelling their *Rules*.

Even *Morality* is but a Scheme of *Politicks*, whereby a Man may be happy himself, and make those so with whom he converses.

Doing Good to the *Publick* brings Honour and Riches, and regulating a Man's self brings Pleasure and Health.

The mysterious *Cabala* is here brought to Light and explain'd, the *Magick* vanish'd, and the *Riddle* expounded.

This is the *Tree of Life* divested of its Allegory, and nothing keeps us from it but Appetites and Passions, which divert and dazzle the Eyes of the Understanding.

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There are Appetites necessarily attending the Necessities of the Body, the irregular gratifying of which produce divers Evils.

But notwithstanding these Appetites are naturally first in our Constitution, yet the Evils arising from them are the Effect of not using the *Judgment* and *Power* we also naturally have, to regulate and correct them.

These Evils are destructive to the Improvement and Happiness of Mankind, which most Men do suffer themselves to fall into, more or less.

Whosoever therefore would enjoy the Pleasures of Life, and be *Happy* and *Wise*, must learn to depart from Evil.

Wisdom is the due apprehending and judging of all Things and Transactions, and persisting with an equitable *Resolution* in acting accordingly.

Virtue and *Morality* are therefore no other than a prudent Conduct, the Effect of the Instruction of *this Wisdom*; whereby a Man regulates the Use of his *Senses*, *Appetites*, and *Desires*, and acts and chuses what conduces most to his Honour, Pleasure, and Prosperity; which being equally and inseparably regarded, compleat his Happiness.

Therefore *Vice* is the Effect of *Ignorance*, and *Folly* the Origin of Evil.

Wisdom only teacheth to depart from it, and *Virtue* and *Goodness* have their Origin from *Wisdom*.

§ 19. After this rational manner did that Royal Philosopher teach *Virtue* and describe *Wisdom*, having *Length of Days* in her right Hand, and in

her left Riches and Honour ; whose Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her paths Peace.

Nor hath the World ever produc'd a more flagrant Instance of the Injury *Knowledge, Virtue, and Religion* hath suffer'd, (by imposing arbitrary Sanctions) than in the Works of this Venerable Author. For by this Means the Curiosity is prevented, and an Examination hinder'd or anticipated, whereby a negligent and idle Assent is given that it is *good*, but the Cause *why*, and the true Excellencies thereof, are unknown and hid.

And this will be always the unavoidable Consequence of those arbitrary Impositions : For if all Things are not liable to *Errors* or *Failings*, yet is the Curiosity of Mankind so delicate, that it would not admit all to be *Good*, till he had seen what was *Good*, or discover'd the *Goodness* of the *Whole*.

Therefore where he is *terrified* out of an Examination, (for fear of some *dreadful* Consequence) he can't venture to do any thing more than implicitly admit it, with an indolent Negligence, neither pleas'd nor displeas'd ; lest letting loose his *uncontroulable* Curiosity, his Judgment may chance to disapprove of somewhat, and lead him to those suppos'd and threaten'd Miseries.

Thus because an esteem'd Oracle pronounc'd him the Wisest Man, *People* do generally say so too, but without looking for a *Reason* for it ; and prophane Persons (with as ignorant and idle a Bigottry) make a Ridicule of the Whole, taking the Negligence of the Assertors (in giving no *Reason* for their Assertions) to be want of *Real Matter* for Proof, and thereby justify their Contempt.

This

This illustrious Prince was the greatest that ever that Nation and People produc'd, the Ornament and Wonder of the Age in which he liv'd : He advanc'd his People as well as himself, and arriv'd to the highest Pirsch of Honour, Pleasure, and Riches.

All this was the Effect of immensurable Knowledge and Understanding, produc'd originally from consummate Wisdom, and out of pure Love to Mankind, he hath, in the Treatise here pointed at, discover'd what *this Wisdom* was, and how attainable.

But Men by a wonderful Infatuation are led to look for Mysteries, and not see the most plain and intelligible Truths that can be express'd, whereby the great Benefit design'd by the Author is lost : Therefore the Injury in this Case is double, that also duplicated.

And 'tis highly probable that our Royal Moralist had the Arbitrary Doctrines of a certain Great and Venerable Author in his view, seeing he endeavours to excite Mankind to a right method of Thinking and Judging what is proper for themselves ; and by his telling us, that this *Wisdom*, which he deciphers, explains and reaches, is the Tree of Life, gives great ground to suspect he directly levels at unravelling the whole Mystery, as well as solving the Enigmatical Account of the Fall of Man, and restoring him to his Reason.

§ 20. Therefore doth he demonstrate the political Necessity of beginning to learn *Wisdom*, by avoiding and departing from *Evil*.

For there is no possibility of being greatly wise without the Knowledge and Practice of Morality be first obtain'd.

No Use can be made of this Method of restoring Men to their Reason, or convincing them of their great Errors, but by a Person who hath his own Passions at command, and can look down on all Opinions that he sees, or can be offer'd to him, with an equitable Regard, neither loving or hating them.

There is no Error but hath some Inconvenience or Evil attending it : The way is then, not to fall directly on the Opinion, but on the ill Consequence ; and, by supposing our selves in the same Mistake, to insinuate a mutual Endeavour with the Person to find some way of avoiding it : By this means the Case may be traced to the Original, and some self-evident Propositions introduc'd which will never be oppos'd ; and when we find our *Antagonist* right in general Notions, to leave the Application to himself ; always observing to come as near the very Case as possible, without touching on it expressly, which wou'd raise the Passion that supports it, or rather reduce the Man into his former state of Madness ; as in other *Franticks*, who have lucid Intervals till the Cause of their Disease is mention'd.

Therefore *Pride* and *Vanity* have nothing to do here, and the Motive must be the real Benefit to the Person intended, tho' he shall ascribe his Cure to his own better Thinking.

Thus, as *Error* is introduc'd, defended, and supported by disorderly *Commotions*, *Distractions*, and *Passion*, so is *Truth* introduc'd by *Reason*, and allay-

allaying those *Heats*, and the Cure perfected by reducing the *Mind* to *Tranquility* and *Peace*.

This whole Method of *Logick* or *Argumentation* is sufficiently illustrated to the *Industrious* in the Examination of *Reveal'd Religion*, and the Original of *Politicks* and *Government*.

The *Obstinate* and *Idle* must remain in their *Ignorance*, or correct their *Vices* first.

So must those proud Persons who are ambitious of having the last Word in an Argument, and vainly ostentatious of *conquering* or *confounding* their Antagonist, are incapable of this.

§ 21. There are certain *Virtues*, and also *Vices* and *Follies*, attach'd to some Men, and some *Constitutions* of *Body*, more than to others; as these have their natural tendency, and produce *Actions*, so the knowledge of them is necessary for the understanding the *Capacities* of Men, and fore-judging what may be expected from them.

But that *Pride goes before Destruction*, is an experimental Observation of Matter of Fact, rather than a moral Instruction; for tho' *Pride* may bring *Enemies* and *Hatred*, and *Evil* doth often follow, as the natural Consequence, yet is there also a certain *Tumescence* of *Mind* and haughty Disposition suddenly arising, foreshewing an *Evil* to come not naturally attach'd to it.

There is also a concurrence together of Things remote from one-another, and an unforeseen interception of the *Actions* of Mankind (with divers others for the *Industrious* to look for) that are distinct from *Chance*, which doth also often interfere, or from a concatenation of Things link'd by necessary Consequences one on another.

A judicious and curious Observation of these Things will lead a Man to the sight of several Matters of Fact, which discover a certain secret interposing Power, which is commonly call'd *Providence*.

Tho' *Chance*, *Natural Consequences*, and *Providence* are often confounded, and mistaken one for another, yet are they distinguishable to the *Wise*; to whom the Story of *Socrates Daemon* will not seem incredible, there being suchlike real Matters to be frequently observ'd, amongst which is the strange Disposition of the Mind in forming the Cure of divers Diseases by the means of Charms; and, that if a Man hears another say the dreaming of such a Thing shall foreshew such an Accident, if there is no Symbol or other Hieroglyphic already fixt in the Mind, it shall be an unexpected and involuntary Character, to signify the same thing for time to come.

There are also some sudden and strong Emotions exciting Men to Actions they can see no Reason for, which appear afterwards the avoiding an unknown (tho' imminent) Danger; and sometimes on other accounts.

These are all of one Nature, and are but few of many Things which shew the distinct Operations of the Mind, its Perception of Things, and Communication with other Beings like itself, and its Endeavour to act and explain itself by such Things as our Senses are conversant with.

But tho' the Mind doth perceive Things necessary to be done, yet can it not force the Will, any more than the sight of a Friend in distress can force a Man to help him; but the Impulses are some-

sometimes so strong, as to amount to little less than Compulsion.

These Things Fools laugh at, and Wise Men therefore observe silently.

And 'tis the neglect of these Observations, and abuse of them, that makes the most sublime and greatest Discoveries and true Knowledge to be lost, or only the Names left, and slighted as Airy Notions, when they are really demonstrable, and founded on true and evident Matters of Fact.

And 'tis a Proficiency in this sort of Knowledge that makes a Man truly prudent, sagacious, fore-knowing, politick, and religious, and is the Perfection of all practical Wisdom.

But let the Curious follow these delightful Processes for themselves, which will sufficiently reward their Industry.

They are led past all Obstructions, into a safe Track, and have a Ray of Light, which will shew them many seeming dark and inexplicable Mysteries.

The secret Meanders of Providence, its Methods and Intentions, are here to be traced, and a vast discovery of the Certainty and Nature of Intellectual and Spiritual Beings.

By this Method may they examine into the Works, Acquisitions, and Discoveries of Men of all Ages of the World, but comparing, judging, and chusing by their own Reason.

The Temple of Knowledge is open'd, the Bars remov'd, and a Clue of Thread in their Hand, with which they may enter the Labyrinth, and search all its secret Recesses, without confounding or losing themselves.

All the Imperfections, Errors, Evils, and Degeneracy of Humanity are owing to Violences and Artifices, by which we hinder or suffer our *Reason* to be hinder'd in doing its Offices.

And the chief End, Duty, Happiness, and highest Perfection that Man can arrive at, consists and is found in a perfect exercise of *Human Reason*.

Wisdom is nothing else but an *Harmony* arising from the right Use of our *Rational Faculties*.

And he is the Greatest, Best, and Wisest Man, and honours his *Maker* most, who useth to greatest Advantage the Excellency that distinguisheth him from other Parts of the Creation.

§.22. So imperceptibly do our Passions, Affections, and accidental Amusements insinuate themselves, and interrupt our *Apprehension* and *Judgment*, in the very *Course* of *Reasoning*, that there is great Need of stopping and making a *Cursory Review* of the *Laws of Reason*, and the Ways by which Errors and Disorders are introduc'd, as often as any such Case presents.

How much more is it necessary to understand the Frame of the Mind, and Art of Regulating it, before any *excellent Proficiency* in Knowledge can be expected?

Therefore tho' here should be nothing wanting to enlighten the Mind, yet ought it to be of no greater length, than that the *whole Design* may be comprehensible at once, that it may be an *incessant* and *perpetual Light* to the Understanding, as often as any *Opinions* offer themselves to Consideration.

For the better regulating our Conceptions, and the easier comprehending it, we may make a short *Recapitulation* of the whole *Work*; which will reduce these *Rational Principles* to certain *Stated Articles*.



RECAPITULATION.

REASON is the distinguishing Excellency, Dignity, and Beauty of Mankind.

There's no other use of *Reason* but to judge of *Good* and *Bad*, *Justice* and *Injustice*, *Wisdom* and *Folly*, and the like, that a Man may thereby attain *Knowledge* to distinguish *Truth* from *Error*, and to determine his *Actions* accordingly.

This *Reason* is known to us also by the Names of *Judgment*, *Light of Nature*, *Conscience*, and *Common Sense*; only varying its Name according to its different *Uses* and *Appearances*, but is one and the same Thing.

The *Understanding* of Mankind consists of *Apprehension*, otherwise call'd *Perception*; *Judgment*, and *Will*, otherwise call'd *Resolution*.

The *Errors* of *Humane Understanding* are in the *Apprehension* before they are brought to the *Judgment*; or in the *Will*, in choosing and resolving on Things without the *Judgment*, or contrary to it.

The *Judgment* of Man is an involuntary Faculty, acted upon by Objects, and determines without any Consent of the *Will*; like a *Mirror*,
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which gives a true Image of every thing that can be brought to it.

And according to the *Certainty*, or *Uncertainty* of any Matter, the *Judgment* determines it to be more or less doubtful, or true, or false.

If there is not sufficient *Certainty*, or some Matter of *Fact*, to demonstrate something clearly to the *Judgment*, no Authority or Power whatsoever can force or perswade it to determine whether it be good or bad: But if it is brought to View, a true Judgment is unavoidable.

Reason is not only a competent and infallible Judge, but the only Test to which all Authorities must submit to be try'd, before we can know our selves, or prove to others, whether they are *Good* or *Bad*.

Whatsoever is *Just*, *Wise*, *True*, and *Good* hath no occasion to fear a Tryal by *Reason*, or to appeal from it to *Authority*.

Believing is an Assent of the *Judgment*.

Therefore where the *Judgment* hath not determin'd or assented to something seen by the *Apprehension*, pretending to believe is a bare Affirmation and Act of the *Will* only; which is no other than ignorant or wicked Lying.

A Voice in Thunder from the Clouds, nor any Prodigy or Miracle whatsoever, can alter or efface the Notions of *Justice* and *Wisdom* in the Minds of Men; it may prevent the Use and Benefit of them, but cannot hinder their Judgments from determining whether what they see and know is just and wise, true and good, tho' it may terrifie them to Silence or Lying.

But

But if the Actions to be done are good and necessary, a bare Probability of the Cause alledg'd for doing them, is sufficient for determining.

Religion and Knowledge is not confin'd to any Persons who have particular Faculties of perceiving, judging, and improving thereby; what is useful is for general Benefit and Instruction.

Things design'd for common *Belief* must have Evidences fitted to common *Reason* and *Sense*.

The Notion of *Justice* and *Wisdom* is prior to the Notion of the *Being of God*.

The Knowledge of the *Being of God* is the Effect of natural Reasoning on Things obvious to our Senses, discovering the World and Things contain'd to be the Production of some one just, wise, powerful, and perfect Being or Agent; and to this irresistible Conception or Idea we give the Name of *GOD*.

The *Immortality of the Soul* is no speculative Amusement, but there are certain Matters of Fact liable to every Man's Observation, which testify a Spirit immaterial, and capable of distinct Existence from the Body: And some farther Enquiries bring Evidences exciting an irresistible Conception of the *Soul's Immortality*.

An interposing and preventing Providence is also discoverable by Observations on Transactions and real Matters of Fact.

All *Religion* which hinders the Use of *Reason* destroys also the Use of the Notions of *Justice* and *Wisdom* in the Mind of Man, the Foundation on which the Knowledge of *GOD* and his Provi-

dence, and the *Immortality of the Soul*, is built, and is therefore a wicked Cheat, dishonourable to *G O D* and *True Religion*, and injurious to *Mankind*.

Religion which teaches a farther Improvement of the *Rational Faculties* of the *Soul* in this *Life*, and the *Care* of it afterward, a *Method* of worshipping *G O D* suitable to the great *Notions* we have of his vast *Wisdom* and *Power*, a recommending our selves to his *Providence* here and hereafter, is of indispensable *Benefit* and *Use* to *Mankind*; the native *Disposition* of *Self-preservation*, *Admiration*, and *Curiosity* excite a natural tendency toward it.

This is the *Original* of all *Religion*, the *Foundation* on which it is built, the *End* to which it tends, and the only *Rule* to which it can be reduc'd and try'd.

Morality is a *Scheme* of *Politicks* whereby a *Man* may be happy himself, and make those so with whom he converses: *Doing Good* to the *Publick* brings *Honour* and *Riches*; and regulating a *Man's self* brings *Pleasure* and *Health*.

'Tis a prudent *Conduct* by which a *Man* regulates the use of his *Senses*, *Appetites*, *Passions*, and *Desires*, and acts and chuses what conduces most to his *Honour*, *Pleasure* and *Prosperity*, which being equally and inseparably regarded, compleat his *Happiness*.

The *Good* and *Benefit* of *Government* is for the *Persons* govern'd.

And this is the *Original Law* of *Laws*, and *Authority* of all *Authorities*, to which all *Governours*

nours and Government, Laws, Politicks, and Customs, stand refer'd, and are thereby to be try'd.

No Laws or Politicks were perfect at the first introduction of 'em, but are alter'd and alterable as the Good and Benefit of the Nation doth more appear or require: And if there are any Laws, Politicks, or Customs to the publick or universal detriment, 'tis just and necessary to alter them, and he is an *Enemy* or *Traytor* that hinders it.

Mankind is naturally endow'd with *Reason* sufficient to provide Laws and invent Methods of Government.

Government founded on the General Good is Self-defensible, and has no need of any other Foundation or Defence but *Nature, Justice, and Reason*.

No Man can have any Pretence, Business, or Pleasure in looking for any other Authority to govern by, or form Schemes of Government from, unless he hath something to act or vindicate that is contrary to *Nature, Justice, and Reason*.

A Man may have a Right to the proper Estate and Possessions of his Predecessor; and the publick Peace and Benefit may make it necessary for him to succeed in the Government:

But there is no Native Right for one Man more than another, to assume Dominion over any People contrary to the general Consent, Peace, and Benefit of those People.

The whole Art of reducing Things to a tryal by *Reason*, consists in *Fortitude*.

That is, in an equitable Resolution of the *Will*

to chuse and refuse according to the Dictates of the *Judgment*.

The *Judgment* is an infallible Light and Direction, whereby *Justice* may be done in apprehending, and *Equity* in chusing.

And the *Sentence* which is form'd on such a rational Tryal, is a Universal Proposition, adapted to the general *Reason* of Mankind, a Self-evident or (at least) an Irresistible Truth.

Which may be thus more clearly demonstrated:

When any thing is offer'd, to which the Belief or Assent of the *Judgment* is requir'd, divide the Mind into *Apprehension*, *Judgment*, and *Will*: If what is seen in the *Apprehension* be contrary to what is requir'd, the *Judgment* doth so determine it to be contrary; and if there is nothing seen by the *Apprehension*, then hath the *Judgment* made no determination.

In either of these Cases it may be boldly affirm'd and demonstrated, that the *Proposer* himself doth not believe it, nor hath any Faculty of his Mind had any thing to do with the Matter, but his *Will* only, and his *pretended Faith* is an idle airy Conceit, an unintelligible Chymæra of the *Phantasie*.

Or, to render this Method of Reasoning yet more familiar,

Consider this Faculty of the Mind (most properly) call'd *Judgment*, by its other Names or Appearances, *viz.* *Reason*, *Light of Nature*, *Conscience*, and *Common Sense*; and it will easily appear that Mankind hath no other Faculties

to understand any Matter by, or Ways of distinguishing one thing from another: Nor is there any Knowledge, Determination, or Satisfaction against it, or without it; neither can the Terrour of Authority, or Amusement of Argument wholly stifle it.

The way then to discover *Truth*, is to consider how Things appear to general Common Sense; that is to say, to indifferent Persons; and to stand with Resolution to the Result that is made on such Consideration.

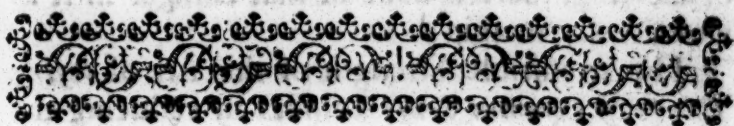
*To prove the Truth of your Work, and shew that you have apprehended justly, and resolv'd equitably, according to the true Dictates of your Judgment, take this Sentence of Common Sense, (that is to say, the Result which is made on a rational Examination of the Case) and reduce it into form by writing it down, and 'twill be found a plain, irresistible, and self-evident Truth, fitted for the general Reason of Mankind; that is, such as every Man's common Sense and Reason can't help acknowledging.

For there is no other Mystery in forming a right Understanding, nor in attaining Knowledge and Wisdom, but what is contain'd in this short Sentence;

Exert with Diligence and Fortitude the common Use of Common Sense.

*Books just publish'd and printed for J. Wilcox,
at the Green Dragon in Little Britain.*

1. **T**HE Gentleman's Recreation, in 4 Parts, viz. Hunting, Hawking, Fishing, and Fowling; with the Method of breeding and managing the Hunting Horse: Also an Abstract of all the Forest-Laws to this Time; illustrated with several Copper Cuts; with easie Directions for blowing the Horn. The Sixth Edition.
2. De Viribus Medicamentorum; or, a Treatise of the Vertue and Energy of Medicines: Containing an Account of all Medicines whatsoever. By *Herman Boerhaave*, now Professor of Physick in *Leyden*.
3. Twelve Sermons, containing the Foundation of Natural and Reveal'd Religion; with the Proofs of Christianity, &c. By *Benj. Whichcot*, D. D.
4. The Description and Use of *Gunter's Quadrant*; to which is added, The Use of *Nepier's Bones*. By *William Leybourn*.
5. The Royal Charter granted to Kings by GOD Himself; collected out of His Holy Word in both Testaments. Printed in 1649.
6. A Practicall Treatise of the *Plague*, and all *Pestilential Infections* that have happen'd in this Island for the last Century. Laying down the Rules and Methods then us'd by the most learned Physicians of those Times, (as *Butler*, *Atkins*, *Bates*, *Johnston*, *Fabritius*, *Regemorterus*, *Rudgeley*, *Rhede*, *Tulpius*, *Wetdenburn*, and other Great Names) as well as what are now proper to be us'd, in order to prevent the spreading of that Contagion. With a Prefatory Epistle address'd to *Dr. Mead*, on Account of his short Discourse concerning *Pestilential Contagion*. By *Joseph Browne*, L. L. M. D.



A N

APPENDIX,

Being an ANSWER to a LETTER desiring some farther Illustration of the *Method of Reasoning* in the 'foregoing Treatise; also the particular application of it to the present Dispute on the A—— C——d.

S I R,

I Am at length convinc'd, that it will be of use to the further rendring this *Method of Reasoning* useful, to illustrate it by deciding two or three well-known and familiar Controversies; and shall therefore, without further *Prologue*, proceed to follow your Advice, and also endeavour to gratifie your Request, by making the very Case you desire one of the Examples; tho' I observe, you rather seem to wish to see it thus determin'd, than to advise me to it; but I shall

shall nevertheless attempt it, and make no doubt of shewing, there is none of that Danger in it as is generally imagin'd.

The irresistible Strength of this Art of *trying Things by Common Sense* consists in reducing the disputed Case to a Self-evident Proposition, and thereby proving to your Antagonist, that he believes no otherwise of it than your self, by letting him see that his own Judgment determines it so, if he will but regard it stedfastly, and not wander from it after airy Phantasies, and be a Slave to Bigottry and every arbitrary Imposition.

Thus no Man ever believ'd *Transubstantiation*, his Senses shew him the Thing as it really is, and his Judgment determines it to be so: And the same Judgment also tells him, that whatsoever is said to the contrary, is contrary to the Evidence of his Senses and the Decision of his Judgment; this is the testimony of all his Senses concern'd, *Seeing, Feeling, and Tasting*; and of all the Faculties of his Understanding concern'd, (*viz.*) *Apprehension and Judgment*: It hath therefore no Existence at all in the *Mind or Understanding of Man*, but as it thus appears: Nor is there any other Argument necessary for confuting it, but by dividing the *Mind or Understanding* into *Apprehension or Perception, Judgment, and Will or Resolution*; and then shewing, that this is an Act of his *Will* only, and so far from being his *Belief or Assent of his Judgment*, that it is the direct contrary. Now, by all the Faculties that it hath pleas'd God to bestow on us for the under-

Understanding of any Matter, and for the distinguishing of one Thing from another, this is as apparent a Falſity as to ſay the Sun is not riſen at mid-day. Therefore to ſay God hath commanded Men to affirm any ſuch thing, is to ſay God hath commanded Men to lye; which accusing God of ſuch Wickedneſs and Folly is a moſt deteſtable Impiety and Prophaneneſs.

The Argument before us is here at a full end, and decided paſt all Objection, theſe laſt Arguments being ſelf-evident and irrefiſtible Truths.

And what generally in ſuch Diſputes follows after this, are Queſtions of another nature, and is controverting whether or no 'tis lawful to accuſe God of this Wickedneſs, Folly, and Injuſtice.

Or is diſputing whether Mankind have Senſes to diſcern *white* from *black*, *hard* from *ſoft*; or Underſtanding to diſtinguiſh *Juſtice* from *Injuſtice*, and *Wiſdom* from *Folly*.

That is, in other words, Whether a Man hath *Reason*, which diſtinguiſheth him from other Animals, or only differs in his Form, as all Species of Creatures do one from another: Or (if it is granted) he hath *Reason*, that is his diſtinction and excellency above them, if he ſhall deprive himſelf of it, and degenerate to a Brute.

Now the Art of managing ſuch Caſes rightly conſiſts in clearing theſe Arguments one of another, and taking care that they are not confounded and blended together, ſo as to perplex the Caſe that you can ſcarce underſtand one-another's meaning: And this is not hard to be done; for your Antagoniſt will admit, that if he durſt rely
on

on his Senses, it appears to him as it doth to you but he depends on an Authority which he cannot doubt on pain of Eternal Damnation, which tells him, he must not regard his Senses. You are therefore here to acquiesce with him, for you are both agreed, that your humane Senses and Understandings make the same determination; and you are then to proceed to the Authority he talks on, and other parts of the Argument. But if while one is talking of the appearance of the Matter of Fact to Common Sense, the other shall answer something relating to the Attributes of God, or the Authority of humane Reason, the Time is spent in Misunderstandings.

You are therefore at the beginning to observe, that the Matter of Fact is one distinct Argument, the Authority of humane Reason another, and the Question if God is *Just* and *Wise*, according to the general notion of *Justice* and *Wisdom*, is another; and to leave it to your Antagonist to chuse any one of them, and bring it to a conclusion, before you proceed to either of the other: This is the way if you are the Defendant. But if you design to convince any Person of his Error who is bigotted in his Simplicity, the way is, to establish the Authority of humane Reason by familiar self-evident Propositions, and to observe silently what impression it makes on him, and so to proceed: For we are not to consider our Arguments according to our own Notions of their force, and from thence to expect immediate Conviction, but to regard how they succeed, or are likely to succeed, with the Person design'd on:

Over-

Overhastiness and Vehemency in arguing is the Effect of Pride, blunts the Poignancy of the Argument, breaks its Force, and disappoints the End.

As in the Case before us (and suchlike) is evident, where the Bigottry is almost invincible : If therefore a Person was to go to one of these, who imagines he believes *Transubstantiation*, and take up the consecrated Bread before him, and say, This is nothing but Bread, you may see, taste, and feel it ; therefore if you say God commands you to believe it is not Bread, you most wickedly accuse God of Lying : This wou'd only raise the Indignation of the Person against you, instead of making any Impression on him, that without so much as thinking at all on what you have said, he rages at you as a prophane Person, setting up your own Sense and Reason above Sacred Authority, and calling what he builds his Eternal Happiness on in question : So that tho' what you affirm is an immediate self-evident Truth, yet you lose the benefit of your Argument, by an ill Method and untimely using it.

You may see, by the use I make of this Case, that I have no particular Antipathy, but design a general Example of it, and have chosen it only as a notorious Matter of Fact, to shew that there is no Folly, Slavery, and Brutality so vile and ridiculous but Men are expos'd to, when they have parted with their Reason ; while the Tyrants that thus bridle and saddle them ride them at their pleasure, with Whips and Spurs to punish them for their Stupidity : For some of these
Do-

Doctrines (which must not be rationally examin'd) have no other intention, but to torment the Spirits of Men, and distract the Minds of the Ignorant; and are so far from tending to the Reformation of Mankind, that they are against Morality.

It would be hard to prove the Benefit of the Doctrine of *Predestination*, or the Use of it in Religion or Manners; yet what Civil Tumults and Disorders hath this occasion'd, and been defended and oppos'd by Publick Authorities! what Horror and Distraction have some People liv'd and dy'd in, with ruminating on it! what Volumes have been wrote, *for* and *against*, when any common thinking rational Person is able to decide it past all Controversie in an hour's time! for, by only fairly stating the Case, it appears at one view.

A Man is decreed, before he is created, to be sav'd, and be eternally happy; therefore after he is created, he hath a particular Grace given him, whereby he can't help leading such a Life, nor accepting such Terms as shall qualifie him for this Glorious Happiness and Reward.

Another Person is decreed to be damn'd, and be eternally miserable, therefore he hath not that Grace given him, and so is incapable of accepting such Terms, or acting as should qualifie him for Happiness, and is therefore eternally punish'd and miserable.

I am not going about, in a series of Arguments to confute this Opinion; any Man who thinks he hath the Power of judging, and the Knowledge

of distinguishing *Goodness* from *Wickedness*, *Folly* from *Wisdom*, and *Justice* from *Injustice*, sees at one view the monstrous Barbarity and Folly of such a Case; and tho' a Potter may do what he will with the Pots he makes, and break them to pieces when he hath done, yet this don't justifie his *Wisdom* for so doing: And tho' it is in his power to make Pots and break 'em, he may nevertheless be a Fool or a Madman; for any Person who sees him act thus, will readily conclude him no better.

Now the Reason why all these Controversies and painful Enquiries have been about so evident an Absurdity, is indeed because the real Thing it self was never enquir'd into, nor controverted: The Dispute hath been, Whether certain Persons of great and universal Credit for their Divine Inspiration and Authority, have taught it; if their Words and Phrases have been rightly understood; if two Persons of equal Reputation for their Sanctity, who wrote (some hundreds of Years ago) directly one against another, can be made to mean one and the same Thing.

These and such-like trifling Disputes about *Words* and *Authorities* hath kept up the Argument so long: The Cause of all this, Men do easily see by their *Natural Reason*, is the Barbarity and Folly of the Thing. They have also a general Notion, that GOD is *Just* and *Wise*; but here is an Authority which they also allow to be indisputably Sacred, that says GOD hath so acted; but instead of recurring to their Reason for Satisfaction, they fall to examine if this Authority is right-ly

ly understood and interpreted, and what reputed *Good Men* have said of it ; which, to sum up the whole Case, is asking the Question, If those *Authorities, Good Men, and Interpreters* have said GOD is guilty of that monstrous Barbarity and Folly : For if it was testified by a Voice from the Clouds, or a Prodigy, it would signifie nothing ; for this *Judgment, Reason, Light of Nature, Conscience, and Common Sense*, will still testify the Barbarity and Folly of it.

Therefore these Disputes and Enquires can't possibly produce any other Consequence than forming the abovesaid Question, Whether these *Authorities, good Men, and Interpreters* have said GOD is guilty of the Barbarity and Folly ? For *Universal Reason*, which is all the Faculty we have of knowing and judging Things by, hath involuntarily and invincibly determin'd the Case it self.

And if 'twas possible to prove this by any Miracle, Authority, or Testimony, that God hath acted after this manner, and thereby attempt to establish it for an *Article of Religion*, it wou'd prove that God is foolish and barbarous ; which is rooting out of the Minds of Men all the Knowledge they have of his Attributes, and renders his Being impossible to be conceiv'd, or believ'd : Which is subverting the Foundation of Religion, and destroying it, with all its Articles.

The Remedy in this Case is, to recur to *Reason*, and consider, that by *Reason and Light of Nature* we see that our selves, and every thing else, are made by some just, wise, perfect, and powerfu

Agent 1

Agent; and by the same Wisdom, Power, and Justice are kept up to their design'd Uses and Ends: And by the same *Reason* and *Light of Nature* by which we see and know the Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, by the same *Reason* do we know, that the Case before us is barbarous and foolish; and, that therefore they are Lyars, wicked Persons, and Dishonourers of God, who affirm any such thing. But if they will persist in it, that something which they call *God* hath so acted and commanded, by what they imagine invincible Proof, then 'tis plain we are mistaken on both sides about the Word; they meaning one Thing of Person by the word *God*, and we another: Like Persons talking of two Men with differing Qualifications, who happen to have one and the same Name.

But as neither of us can know our GOD, or give any Account of him, but by his Actions, so we find Their God to have done Things inconsistent with one-another, and daily requires Things contrary to Justice and Wisdom: And by the Appearances which they pretend to produce of him, he seems to be a heterogeneous sort of Material Being, very barbarous and tyrannical, but very inconstant and mutable: From whence we conclude, for all their talk of his vast Power, that he is not lasting, but perishable, and can do us but little hurt or good, so to be slighted accordingly with Contempt, leaving these his Champions to hammer out by themselves some new Supporters to this Chimerical Image of a God; the Arguments on this Subject being like

the following merry Interruption which two Gentlemen met withal, on their discoursing about the Heroes worthy to be plac'd at the Table of Fame.

2d Gent.] " No, Sir, I can't agree to that,
 " because tho' there may be a great deal in what
 " you say of the Passion, Barbarity, &c. but when
 " we consider the vast Benefit we reap from such
 " Persons, that they are the Preservers and De-
 " fenders of their Country; and what noble
 " Sentiments inspire these Heroes to such dange-
 " rous Actions; and, that even in the heat of
 " them a worthy Gallantry and Honour is seen,
 " and dispers'd to all meriting it around them,
 " discovering the Man from the raging Brute;
 " and, as *Alexander* excell'd others in these glo-
 " rious Virtues, can we with Justice then hinder
 " *Alexander* from his Seat at the Table?

Interrupter] " Who, Sir! Is it *Alexander* you
 " are talking of all this while, and his Honour
 " and Virtue? I believe he had not common
 " Honesty; nor I never read of any great Vir-
 " tue belonging to him.

2d Gent.] " You look, Sir, something like a
 " learned Person, but I doubt you have not read
 " the best and truest Authors, for then you must
 " have known his early Magnanimity, even to
 " the delight and admiration of his Father and
 " all others, in mounting *Bucephalus*; also his in-
 " vincible Bravery in divers Battels and Sieges:
 " But then his Honour and Honesty, how excel-
 " lently did he shew it to *Darius's* Family! and
 " divers other Instances we have also of his love
 " of Learning and -----

In-

Interrupt.] "Hold, Sir, pray go no further:
 "As for his being a Soldier, I don't dispute it at
 "all; it's very common for such Persons to go
 "for Soldiers, and for his behaviour at those Sie-
 "ges, may be also true, it might be in the plunder
 "of those Places he got Money to set up his
 "Trade of a *Coppersmith*, for his Father and he
 "might have been both *Tinkers*, as far as we
 "know. But, Sir, you are grossly mistaken to
 "think I have not read the best of Authors; for
 "I do assure you I have, and my Author tells me
 "you are also mistaken in the Virtue of your *A-*
 "*lexander*; for he expressly bids the Brethren be-
 "ware of him, and says, *Alexander* had done him
 "much Wrong. And where are you now, Sir,
 "with your great Reading, for my Author is no
 "less than *St. Paul*, and I hope you won't pretend
 "to dispute what *St. Paul* says?"

Exeunt 2 Gent. laughing] Ha, ha, ha!

I shall leave the principal Application, only re-
 mark, that when stupid *Ignorance* shall have *Im-*
pudence enough to assume an Authority of deter-
 mining Things exclusive of Rational Arguments,
 there's nothing so serious or sacred, but may be
 render'd contemptible.

I come now to answer your second Request,
 which will make a third Example of this method
 of Reasoning.

But (by the way) I think you need not fear the
 Use of the word *Judgment* being disputed; for if
 you ask one of these Persons, after he hath told
 you *this* is his Faith and firm Belief, Whether 'tis

the Assent of his Judgment, on a right understanding of the Matter, he will tell you *Yes* certainly, and perhaps resent it as an Affront to his Understanding and Honesty, that you should imagine he pretends to believe a Thing which his Judgment did not on due consideration tell him was true.

And indeed, if Mens Opinions are not the real, imaginary, or pretended Dictates of their Judgments, they are Hypocrites and Lyars confels'd.

Therefore a *Creed*, at the Introduction of it, is propos'd as an Instrument containing some Articles to which not only the Assent and Belief of all Men is requir'd, but they are also requir'd not to say they believe it idly, and without Consideration, but are to be careful, that when they say *they believe*, they say so on deliberate Judgment and Understanding: And if there is any thing contain'd that's obscure, there are Comments, Explanations, and Teachers, to instruct the Ignorant, and bring it to their Understanding, that they may judge and believe it.

By the words *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* we are to understand Three distinct Beings: The *Father* is a perfect distinct Being, the *Son* a perfect distinct Being, and the *Holy Ghost* a perfect distinct Being; therefore those three Words are three Terms or Denominations we give to three distinct Ideas. When we use the word *Father*, we conceive something that is neither *Son* or *Holy Ghost*: By the word *Son* we conceive something that is neither *Father* or *Holy Ghost*; and by *Holy Ghost*, some-

something neither *Father* or *Son*: And these three Ideas are as distinct as the Ideas of a *Man*, a *Church*, and a *Ship*. When we say the word *Man*, we mean something that is neither *Church* or *Ship*, &c.

Now to conceive these three distinct Ideas by three distinct Names to be one Idea by one distinct Name, and so believe these three Persons to be only one, is one of the most nice Inventions that ever the subtlest *Virruoso* contriv'd to puzzle the Wit of Man with, and is just as easie to do as it is to conceive and believe that one Person is deriv'd from another, and begotten, and the other Person deriv'd from those two, and yet be both of them Eternal, and without beginning.

But, to leave these Absurdities without troubling our selves to recite any more of 'em:

'Tis demonstrable no Man in the World did ever yet believe them.

For Believing is an Assent of the Judgment: But here is nothing which humane Apprehension did ever comprehend or perceive, and the Judgment hath consequently nothing to act on, nor any thing to determine concerning the Goodness or Badness, Truth or Falshood of. 'Tis true, here is a Proposition offer'd, but as it contains nothing that can be understood, Judgment can form no determination of the Matter contain'd; but of the Proposition in general there is an involuntary Sentence produc'd by the universal Judgment of Mankind, that it is an unintelligible piece of Nonsense. And as strange as this may appear to some, or (perhaps) ludicrous to others, 'tis a serious and self-

self-irresistible Truth ; and the Persons who conceit they believe so, will be found (on a little examination) to have amus'd themselves with an Imagination of the Phantasie, their pretended Belief being no other than an Act of their Will only, an Habit of affirming they know not what.

Nevertheless I can't see but this Doctrine might have been taught and receiv'd long enough, if it had not been for the Author of this severe Penalty, which he so positively and dreadfully pronounced, that he forc'd Men to a necessary Curiosity of examining what it was they were to believe on peril of Eternal Misery : and all the Satisfaction they can arrive to is, that there are certain Words and Letters jumbled together, which, when pronounc'd, make a Sound, but without any Meaning, that is in the compass of Humane Understanding to find out or explain.

And if some few Persons should obstinately say they do apprehend and believe this, it signifies nothing, for it's apparent it is not fitted to common Understanding ; and 'tis therefore trifling and foolish to offer it.

And, to Command a Man's Judgment to assent to a Thing which is contrary to the involuntary Determination and Testimony of his Judgment, is great Folly, Barbarity, and Injustice, besides the Impiety of accusing God of this Injustice.

Now all the Words that can be multiply'd about the Inspiration of this Author, if the Proof of his Divinity was never so plain, and a hundred Miracles were wrought in our sight to shew it, it amounts to nothing at all ; for the Case stands

impossible to be assented to by the Judgment ; and the Injustice and Folly of commanding a Man to assent to a Thing which is not adapted to his Understanding and Judgment, stands constantly condemn'd by general *Reason*, common *Sense*, and *Conscience*, and by all the Faculties we have of understanding any Matter, or distinguishing one Thing from another : Nor can the Miracles or Threatnings have any other Effect than to terrifie a Man to Silence or Lying, and say against his Conscience, *He believes what he does not* : And tho' he should for many Years bring himself to an Habit of affirming it, yet is he no other than in a state of Scepticism, for this *Judgment*, *Reason*, *Conscience*, and *Common Sense* will be frequently resisting his Obstinacy, and testifying the Truth.

Now here hath been four times more said about this matter than is necessary for the Confutation, but 'tis suppos'd this Method of Reasoning is not sufficiently known and establish'd ; if 'twere, how short and easie would be the decision of many great Controversies ! as appears by the Example of this before us, about which so many fine Speeches have been made, and Volumes wrote, stands in these few following Lines fully examin'd and decided in a Tryal by *Common Sense*.

That three Things by three distinct Names are one Thing by one distinct Name, without confounding the Three, or dividing the One ; and, that two Persons, that are one of them deriv'd and begotten from another, and the other that is deriv'd from those two, are self-existent Beings, without Beginning, and Eternal, are unintelligible pie-

ces of *Nonsense* and *Falshood* which no Man ever did or can believe, his Judgment not being able to assent to it, but involuntarily determines the contrary.

To offer these to a Man for the assent of his Judgment, is either Folly or Wickedness, and an Affront to Humane Understanding.

To command the Belief thereof, with Punishment on the failure, is a most barbarous piece of Injustice, besides forcing Men to lye.

To say, GOD hath so commanded or acted, is detestable Impiety and Prophaneness.

But to apply this to our Purpose, which is no other than teaching a Just Method of *Reasoning*, this is a notable Example of a dangerous unforeseen Way, by which Error is introduc'd by over-hastily resolving on the Negative because the Affirmative is not prov'd: For I make no doubt but many Persons who read this will imagine the Doctrine of the Trinity condemn'd, whereas 'tis only a proud wicked Person who, after so gross and vile a manner, pretended to describe the Deity, and abuse it also, by making GOD father his wicked and barbarous Method of enforcing it. But to make an end of this Censure, the shortest way is, to look on this as only a confus'd unintelligible Description of a *Heterogeneous Monster* of their own making, to which they are obstinately bent to give the Appellation of *God*, and to which they have applied Attributes suitable to the Drudgery they imploy him in: But this concerns not the Great and Wise *Author of the Universe*, and therefore we have no further to say to them.

'Tis

'Tis true, our GOD must be only One, indivisible and self-existent, but nevertheless who can dare to assent the Negative, and say there may not be a Triplicity or Trinity after some manner or another ? For if a Person was to form such an Instrument as before, and tell Mankind, if they do not believe, that it is impossible for there to be any such thing as a Trinity or Triplicity after any manner in the Deity ; this wou'd be as unjust and barbarous as the other, and both equally condemn'd by *Common Sense*.

But to cross the Expectations of prophane Persons, I can't help telling them, that tho' 'tis impossible for Men to conceive it after so wretched a manner as the afore-meant Author wou'd impose on us, yet the Notion of the Trinity, consider'd as a pleasing divine Speculation, is not so absurd as they imagine, and is older than Christianity ; and to Persons who understand Musical Proportions and Sounds, is not inconceivable ; as in the *Diatessaron*; which consider'd Geometrically compounded of three only Spaces or Distances, and as the compleat Original of all Musical Compositions, will afford a pleasing Amusement, and excite an Idea very agreeable to the Subject in hand. I have not now Time nor Room to shew the Process, but wou'd be glad to see Persons who ought to make such Divine Speculations their Business, consult that great Philosopher. The Primitive Christians, 'tis well known, were not asham'd to own they receiv'd and practis'd many things from the *Pythagoreans*. But tho' I recommend this way of conceiving of the Deity to those who are capable

ble of it, yet wou'd it be the greatest Folly and Injustice to expect or command others, who are not capable of this, to conceive it so.

It would be of advantage to us to form the Imagination of a Scale like this following, whereby we might measure the Degrees of *Certainty* and *Uncertainty*, as the Evidences of them occur to our Apprehension :

Certain,
 Probable,
 Indeterminable,
 Possible,
 Impossible or False.

What is conceivable is possible ; then the most Profane will admit, that we have had some Testimonies of a threefold appearance of the Deity, from such Hands as are worth our Consideration. To this add, that it hath been taught Philosophically, and it will rise above the middle of our Scale, almost to *Probability* ; however, to make the greatest Allowance that any Rational Examiner can desire, it must be left in the middle, *Indeterminable*, till further Enquiry.

But surely we should be justly condemn'd, if because we find we have been abus'd by those who have also betray'd what they pretend to defend, that therefore we will take the contrary Extream, and fly in the Face of all the *Practis'd Religion* and *Laws* of our Country, and assert the Negative with the same wicked *Presumption* and *Partiality*.

I have thus endeavour'd to gratify you in this Point, and have taken the same uncontroulable Liberty (as you are pleas'd to call it) as before; and I should here finish, but can't help taking Notice, that after all this Licentious Examination, we are, in respect to Religion (abstracted from the evident *Innovations* and *Usurpations* of wicked Men) nothing short of where we were before we set out.

For if, in some Cases of Religion, there should not be sufficient Evidences to excite a perfect Idea of the Matter desir'd; yet if a Duty was inferr'd from thence, which was apparently for the Benefit of our Souls or Bodies here or hereafter, for the Good of Mankind in Society, and agreeable to the Honour and Attributes of GOD, we should have nothing to disturb our Peace, nor to excite too curious an Examination.

That the Religion of our Country is reducible to this, and therefore defensible by Reason, is an evident Fact, as appears by the Success of some worthy Persons who separate the *Irrationalities* and *Usurpations*, and yet preserve it entire.

And happy is it for us that it is so, for Authoritative Religion (if we had any occasion for it) is by impolitick Management quite ruin'd; the very Vulgar see the Cheat, and among Men of Sense, Curiosity, and Education, not one in fifty but condemn it, and look upon the *Defenders* of it as ignorant despicable Fools, or pernicious Knaves.

And as for those who pretend to interrupt the Political Constitution of our State by their Authoritative Religion, which is not to be question'd
by

by Reason, they are guilty of the most daring Impudence that was ever offer'd to Mankind; it is High-Treason, in the Effects of it, against the Civil Government, betraying the Liberties of a happy free People, destroying their Peace, and insultring their Common Sense.

But since this setting up of Authority against Reason is now generally discover'd to be detrimental to our Religion, and destructive to the State, it is Matter of some Admiration, What can be meant by defending it!

To pretend to teach Mankind by Authority, and not allow him Reason, is as fruitless as it's idle and ridiculous to attempt it; for there is no other Faculty to understand a Matter by, or way of distinguishing one thing from another; and the Notions of *Justice* and *Injustice*, *Wisdom* and *Folly*, are after the same manner imprinted in the Mind, and full as early as the Notions of Colours are equally unalterable, and may be as truly and properly apply'd; though Men may (if they please) take a stain'd Glass to see an Object with, instead of looking on it with their naked Eye; or in the room of examining it themselves, turn their Backs, and desire another to tell them what Colour it is.

But here is still no Use for this Arbitrary Imposition on our Reason in *Great Britain*, and therefore we shall consider the Pretenders to it as a set of wicked Persons, who have fram'd a *Machiavellian System of Politicks* (which they are pleas'd to call *Religion*) to gain themselves an absolute Dominion; and their God, which
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gives the amus'd Sanction, is an Idol of their own Invention, to patronize all the Villanies and Impositions they think fit to embarrass the World with. But a Confusion is rais'd in Men's Minds by the equivocal Use of the Word *God*, it being the same Denomination Men apply to the True Deity.

There is therefore an absolute Necessity of thus thinking of those sort of Persons, in order to make a Separation, and excite in our Minds a clear and distinct Notion of *True Religion* from *False*, and of the *True GOD* from wicked Men's Description of a God.

When we have thus done, we shall soon see that the Object of *True Religion*, and all Rational Mens Speculations, is an Eternal, Unchangeable, Omnipotent Being, infinitely Good, Just, and Wise, according to the general Notion of those Attributes imprinted in Men's Minds: Therefore when any Person talks to us of *God* and *Religion*, contrary to the common Notions of these Attributes, we have no more to do but to conclude that they mean the aforesaid Idol.

As for the Information you gave me of a Design of publishing the *Recapitulation* of the 'foregoing Treatise by it self, without my Leave, I care not much, especially since I have had Time to correct it, and it hath past your Approbation, and some others, whom I justly value. Let them call it, *The Creed of a Free-Thinker*, or what they please, I find we agree in our Opinions, that it can't be too publick to let the World see that the Clamours against *Rationalists* and *Free-Thinkers* is

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is exactly the same with the *Athenians* against *Socrates*; the *Attheist* and *Sceptick* vanishes before *Reason*, and retorts upon themselves.

And indeed the Accusation of the extraordinary Irreligion of the present Age, seems to be not very just, nor to have any Foundation, but that Men will not be so easily bubbled out of their *Common Sense* into their *ridiculous Notions of Religion*.

There has been as many Additions to the Demonstration of the Being of a *G O D*, and his Providence, and the Immortality of the Soul, and as many old ones reviv'd, as in any Age; and Subjects of Divinity and Morality rationally handled, are the most pleasing Entertainments for the generality of Men of Sense; witness some Tragedies and Treatises of that nature. The Author of the *Spectator* also remark'd, That he sold more of his Speculations on those Subjects, than of the more light and diverting.

And even from the Pulpit (as prophane as they think the Age) if the Discourse is to Men as rational Creatures, and the Persons Life and Manners agreeable to the Worthiness of his Office, he is deservedly follow'd, admir'd, and distinguishably valued.

For *Eloquence*, *Reason*, and *Divinity* conjoyn'd, is as harmonious a Delight to a Rational Man, as a good Composition of Musick well perform'd is to a Musical Ear.

F I N I S

MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

